

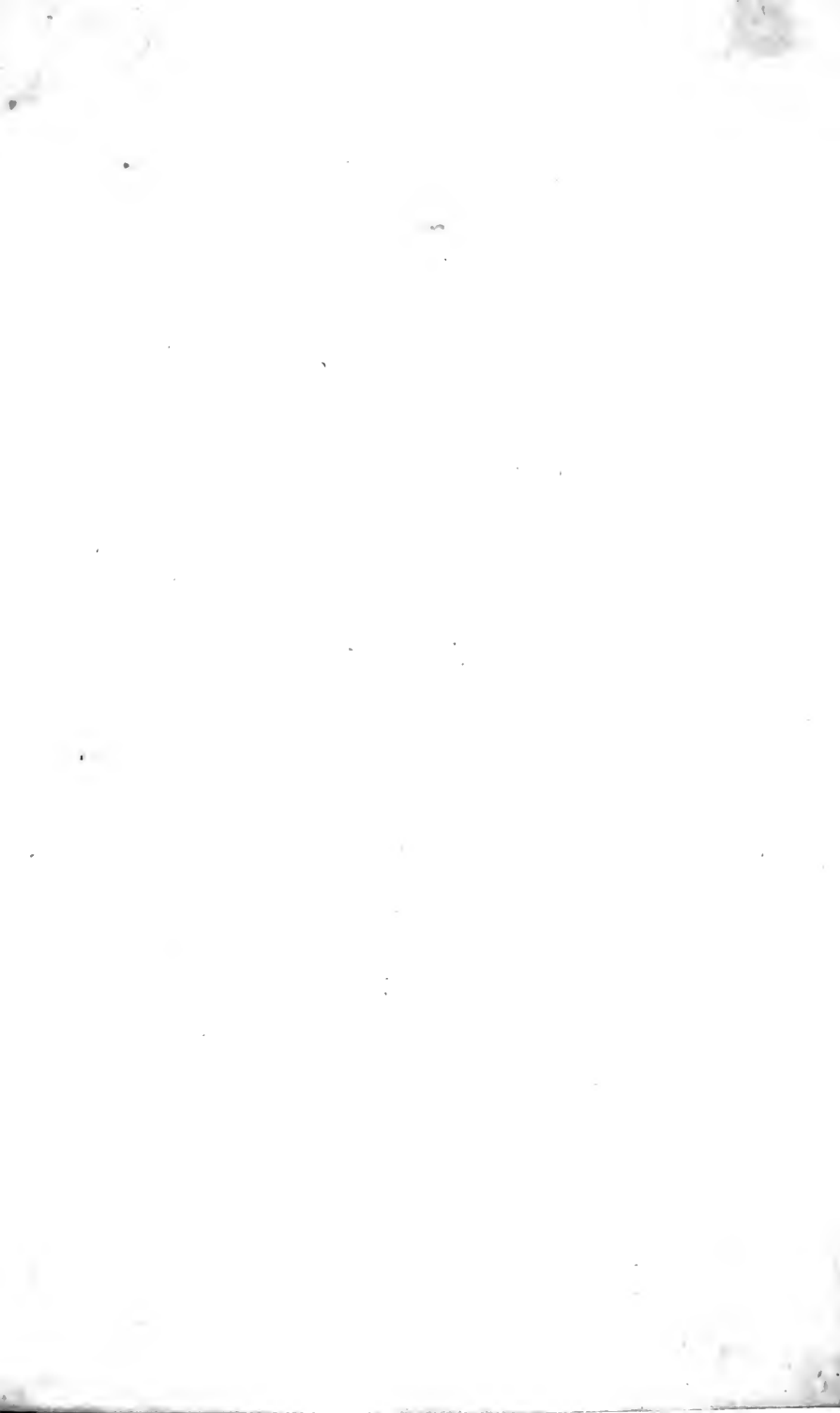




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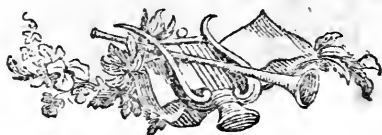


The R.^t Hon.^{ble} Edm.^d Burke.

THE LIFE
OF
EDMUND BURKE.

COMPREHENDING AN
IMPARTIAL ACCOUNT
OF HIS
LITERARY AND POLITICAL EFFORTS,
AND A
Sketch of the Conduct and Character
OF HIS MOST EMINENT
ASSOCIATES, COADJUTORS, AND OPPONENTS.

By *ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.*



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1798.

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GENERAL and special objects, which it would be the impertinence of egotism to detail, had long led me to a close contemplation of the history, talents, and conduct of Mr. Burke. I last year wrote a sketch of his literary and political life for a monthly publication;* part of which appeared in the number for May, and the rest afterwards, though not in continuity.

Finding that sketch favourably received, and being not without encouragement in previous opinion and criticism to perseverance in literary exertion, I resolved to extend the sketch into a minute consideration of the intellectual, moral, and political his-

* The Scientific Magazine and Freemasons Repository.

tory and conduct of Edmund Burke. Unavoidable avocations prevented the work from solely occupying my attention, though not from occupying it chiefly. The anxiety of an author leads me to dread that the perspicacious reader will, in the defects, very readily perceive the intermission, though he may doubt the exertion, or at least deny it to have been effectual. The nature of the subject has necessarily introduced other characters, especially literary and political. My desire has been to narrate truly and appreciate impartially : if I have failed, it has been an error of judgment, not a misrepresentation of intention.

In the execution of my plan, I have been assisted with valuable information, for which I feel greatly indebted to the donors. From the able and learned Editor of the "Posthumous Works" I have received many important facts and observations, not to be derived from any other source. As his opportunities of knowing action were many, and his talents for estimating character great, his communications of the result were liberal.

To another member of the same branch of the legislature I am also very much obliged for many interesting and characteristic anecdotes, both of the subject and his connections. Burke and his intimates he knew well, and often bore a part in their serious discussions, and in their contests of wit ; either of which characters he can himself so ably sustain ; fitted to delight convivial circles by his facetiousness, or to analyse the mind of a Johnson.

From an acute and ingenious literary friend, a native of the same country, I have received valuable accessions both of fact and remark ; and, through him, from a learned gentleman who was intimately connected with Mr. Burke's son.

I have likewise to add my thanks to a Reverend gentleman of great erudition for his communications respecting a celebrated Dean, and some anecdotes concerning Mr. Burke.

My acknowledgements are also due to others. But as, of a mind of so uncommon force and constant operation, many acts must still remain to be known, further

communications will be most thankfully received, and are most respectfully solicited, for a future edition.

Sloane-Street, May 22d, 1798.

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THE LIFE
OF
EDMUND BURKE.

OF the various studies which occupy the attention of man, the wise esteem those the most important which unfold human nature, educe moral duty, and inculcate virtuous conduct. Hence history, which shews the connection between principle and action, action and consequence, derives its chief utility. Not real history only, but its imitator, poetry, though pleasing from a variety of causes, is useful and interesting in proportion to its exhibition of moral nature, and those parts of physical by which it is affected.

In history, whether real or imitative, we are more instructed by the developement of particular characters than of general measures ; more interested in individual enjoyment and suffering, than in the prosperity or adversity of nations. Of history, therefore, the most instructing and most interesting kind is Biography. “ No species of history, (says the sage Author of the RAMBLER) seems more

worthy of cultivation than biography; since none can be more delightful or more useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition." Hence Johnson infers, that there has rarely passed a life, of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful.

The facts which constitute the excellence of biography are of an evanescent kind, and rarely transmitted by tradition: they are often lost, unless carefully collected during the life either of the subject or of his cotemporaries. It is of great importance, therefore, to procure the materials of biography while entire, and not impaired by time.

From the inattention of cotemporaries to the lives of some of our most eminent poets, the first biographer of modern times found only scanty materials. The public may regret that his knowledge of the life of Butler was not equal to that of the life of Savage. After a lapse of ages, such knowledge, however, was not attainable concerning those who had not found faithful and judicious biographers whilst the subject was fresh.

Lord Bacon observes, that history is either narrative or inductive: narrative, when recording facts; inductive, when recording facts to establish general principles. Narrative history is the foundation of inductive. We must

know particular facts before we can deduce from them general conclusions.

This division holds respecting biography and every other species of history.

To collect useful facts, requires only industry, observation, and common judgment. To compose an inductive history or biography requires much higher powers: yet the lower exertions are beneficial in affording materials.

As no age has produced a greater number of eminent men than the present, should any future Johnson arise to write the history of Genius, it would not only be useful but necessary, in order to give his biography the full effect, that he should have an accurate account from those who lived at the time. No one individual can know *all* the facts which may form the materials of an entertaining and useful life. *Variety of narratives*, if authentic, impartial, and not trivial, will tend to the great ends of biography. Although there be no such life of Johnson, as Johnson himself could have written on a similar subject, yet much advantage has accrued to society from different writers having undertaken an account of his life. From *several* writers, a much greater quantity and variety of important information are transmitted to posterity, than would have reached them from the talents and industry of any one of his biographers. From the *result* of their labours there are now sufficient materials to employ the

pen of a man possessing the requisite talents for biography :—a thorough knowledge of human nature, an acquaintance with that kind of situation in which the subject acted, and that species of talents which he exerted. From these only, combined with a detail of facts, such as can be had from none but cotemporaries, may a just view be formed of individual character.

Biography derives its principal advantage from the minute knowledge it affords of moral causes, their operation and effects ; by enabling us to trace action to mind ; the modifications, habits, and affections of mind to their sources, whether original or factitious ; and thence deducing lessons of moral conduct. It is interesting, from displaying situations and passions which we can, by a small effort of the imagination, approximate to ourselves,—the feelings of the father, son, husband, wife, and friend.

The interest arising from the view of the qualities, situation, feelings, actions, conduct, and characters of our species is often enhanced by circumstances peculiar to individuals, by individual powers, affections, and exertions, intellectual and moral ; their direction, their effects on the happiness of the subject himself, of others, and particularly on our own. We admire extraordinary talents or qualities, we are interested in the history of

such talents or qualities, producing important consequences to the welfare or hurt of mankind. We are most deeply affected by the history of men, the consequences of whose powers and conduct have extended to our own times and country. The lives of soldiers who have fought for us, of scholars who have informed, instructed, or delighted us, of statesmen whose measures and conduct are felt in our society, are read with peculiar delight. We wish to know every minute circumstance that can illustrate their characters, and are even pleased with those that are not in themselves material, because belonging to an interesting object.

Whether we consider talents, knowledge, or their direction and effects on human affairs, and especially on those affairs in which we of this country are most particularly concerned, no man of modern times stands more eminently distinguished than EDMUND BURKE. It is not his genius only,—a genius of which we perceive the vast expanse, but cannot see the bounds ;—a genius which, though it had not been cultivated by erudition, enlightened by knowledge, formed by philosophy, must by its own natural force have rendered its possessor infinitely superior to ordinary men, even with the advantages of education ;—a genius not only grasping, but comprehending ; not only comprehending, but *appropriating* almost every subject of human learning ;—whatever it saw, occupying ; what-

ever it occupied, possessing ; whatever it possessed, employing ;—which has rendered the character and history of this personage interesting and momentous. A very great part of its importance comes from the *direction* which his inclination, together with the circumstances of the times, have given to his talents, and the consequences which they *have produced*, and *are producing* to mankind. The *effects* could not have proceeded but from great *efficacy*: the efficacy might have existed without the effects.

Whether the effects are salutary or pernicious, it would be premature in me to assert, until, after a narrative of facts, I have adduced the reasons on which I may have formed an opinion. But those, who contend either the one or the other, concur in admitting that few or none have had, and have, more influence on the welfare of mankind than EDMUND BURKE.

According to the censurers of this great man—

His recent writings and eloquence afford the most extraordinary instance of powers of the first magnitude misapplied to the most hurtful purposes, and producing the most lamentable effects. He repressed the increasing spirit of liberty, which, if allowed to operate, would have produced in these realms a reform of abuses and corruptions, becoming daily more numerous, more extensive, and more destructive. His writings and eloquence were the means of obstructing the improving exertions of unfettered *reason*, and of again binding her

in the chains of authority, prejudice, priestcraft, and tyranny. He stirred up an abhorrence of the French revolution, an alarm against all principles of freedom, because their abuse or excess, arising from circumstances not necessarily connected with them, had produced disorders. Through his writings, eloquence, and influence, incidental excesses were identified with liberty itself. Emancipation from civil and ecclesiastical slavery was reprobated, because resentment for long suffered and long felt oppression had stimulated violence against the oppressors. Monarchical, aristocratical, and clerical usurpers were defended; and were not only defended, but represented as martyrs in the cause of virtue and religion, when deprived of that power which they had never any right to possess. It was he that broke the WHIG PHALANX, indisposed men of rank and property to a reform, which, before abuses were arrived at such a height, many of them had deemed absolutely necessary to the salvation of the constitution. Having rendered the majority of his countrymen inimical to the French republic, and to the principles of liberty which had given it being, he prepared them for hostilities against France and Freedom, and for joining the combination of despots. In short, according to the party in opposition to Government, Mr. Burke prevented the reform of abuses, which had in-

creased, were increasing, and, unless speedily removed, must ruin the country ; and by changing the sentiments of Britons, and exciting a hatred and alarm against the dissemination of freedom, of which he once had been the zealous champion, caused a war, in principle absurd, unjust, and inexpedient ; in event disgraceful and disastrous ; in its consequences pregnant with destruction.

Such is the opinion the opponents of the present Administration, whether high or low, learned or ignorant, able or weak,—from a Lauderdale, an Erskine, a Mackintosh, a Sheridan, and a Fox, down to a Jones and a Thelwall,—entertain of the recent conduct of Burke, and its consequences.

According to the admirers of Burke's recent conduct—he affords an instance of the greatest energy employed in effecting the most beneficial purposes. His writings, eloquence, and wisdom, recalled Britain from the deluding errors of visionary theories to the salutary lessons of experience ; from the abstraction of metaphysics and the falsities of fanciful hypothesis to the contemplation of their actual state of welfare and happiness ; demonstrated to them the evils to which rage for innovation was leading its votaries ; taught them not to prefer possible, but very improbable, acquirement to certain possession ; persuaded them to look to their own history and experience, and not to the

mischievous speculations of their neighbours. Seeing the increasing disposition in many individuals to sacrifice the constitution, and consequently the happiness of their country, to revolutionary doctrines, he warned them of the misery which they were ignorantly seeking; he excited the majority of men of talents, influence, and interest in the state, to vigilance and vigour in preserving their country. He, from the first symptoms, fully comprehended the nature of the disease, and prognosticated its dreadful effects; stopped the infection from spreading in his own country, by prescribing efficacious preventives, and causing all communication to be cut off with the country in which the pestilence was raging. His genius was the agent of wisdom, his wisdom the minister of patriotism. He was the bulwark of the British constitution, of rational liberty, and of property; the champion who drove back the flames of Jacobinism from our battlements and fortresses; the preserver of our church and state in the various orders and gradations of their component members, the securer of internal tranquillity and happiness; whose energy was the principal source of vigour in external measures necessary to save this country from being over-run by French politics, and even dependent on French power; measures which, though they have failed of complete success, as to continental affairs, yet have saved

the constitution, and preserved the independence of Britain.

Such is the opinion entertained of Burke by the approvers of the present system and plans of Government.

Those who do not concur in every particular of either the praise or the censure of this personage with the supporters or opponents of Administration, agree with both in ascribing the prevention of change and the continuance of the present system,—whether, on the whole, good or bad—the war, whether, on the whole, right or wrong,—chiefly to the powers of Edmund Burke.

As in the general estimation, he is the author of effects the most momentous to mankind,—even had his influence never been felt in the former part of his life, had he been totally inactive during the American contest and at every other period previous to the French revolution, had he never before been distinguished as a genius, a scholar, an orator, a politician, a philosopher,—his history and character must be highly important and interesting to Britons and to mankind. But it is not as a literary and political man alone that a biographer is to regard Burke. By following him to the retirement of civil and domestic life,—by viewing him as a neighbour, a companion, a friend, a brother, an associate, a private member of the community, as a husband, a father, a master of a family,—we must reap the highest intel-

lectual and moral instruction, and interest the best affections.

The course of general study had led the writer of this sketch to a close contemplation of the literary efforts and character of Burke. Special objects combined with general study in producing a still closer attention to his political exertions, and to consider them in detail and principle, and the parts severally, and as members of a whole system. Anxious to know the civil and domestic life of a personage whose literary and political talents are so eminent, the writer has spared no pains to procure authentic information concerning his private engagements, relations, habits, temper, manners, and conduct.

The first quality of biography is authenticity. A biographer and an historian, like any other witness, is bound to speak, as far as he knows it, the truth, all the truth, and nothing but the truth; regarding fact only, not the *consequences* of the narration to the *character* of its subject. A necessary constituent of authenticity is impartiality. If a writer set out with a predisposition either to praise or to censure, he is apt to lose sight of truth; to bend facts to a favourite hypothesis.

It has been asserted, in a preface to some posthumous publications of Burke, that *consistency* marks every part of his conduct. The writer of this Life is neither the FRIEND nor the

ENEMY of Burke: neither *assumes* that he was consistent nor inconsistent, but will *impartially narrate* every fact which he deems illustrative of his talents and character. He will endeavour to ascribe the due merit to his extraordinary excellencies; also to notice his defects—as from such he, in common with all men, was not exempt. He who should exhibit *one side only* is an advocate, not an historian; and not a very judicious advocate, because so easily to be convicted of partiality. Neither a friend nor an enemy is the fittest for writing a true life. The friend is apt to become a panegyrist, the enemy a satirist: the former to overcharge the good, and sink the bad; the latter to overcharge the bad, and sink the good. Truth is either lost in the blaze of admiration, or perverted by the misrepresentation of malignancy.

To narrative biography only (according to Lord Bacon's distinction) does the author pretend, and arrogates to himself no qualities beyond those which it requires:—knowledge of important facts, veracity and impartiality in recording them. With his information on the subject, and his determined adherence to authenticity, he hopes he may be able to exhibit, if not a finished, a true account of this illustrious personage; and may afford many useful materials to future biographers of greater talents and skill.

EDMUND BURKE was born in the city of Dublin, * January 1st, 1730. He derived his descent from a respectable family. His father was of the Protestant persuasion, and by profession an attorney, of considerable ability and extensive practice. Young Edmund received the first part of his classical education under Mr. Abraham Shackleton, a quaker, who kept an academy at Ballytore, near Carlow. Mr. Shackleton was a very skilful and successful teacher, and at his school were educated many who became considerable in their country.

Under the tuition of this master, Burke devoted himself with great ardour, industry, and perseverance, to his studies, and laid the foundation of a classical erudition, which alone would have entitled ordinary men to the character of great scholars, but constituted a very small proportion of his multifarious knowledge. His classical learning was the learning of a philosopher, not of a pedant. He considered the ancient languages not as arrangements of measures, but as keys to ancient thoughts, sentiments, imagery, knowledge, and reasoning.

Johnson observes, that there is not an instance of any man whose history has been minutely related, that did not in every part of his life discover the same proportion of intel-

* His father for some time resided at Limerick; from which it has been erroneously asserted that Edmund was born there.

lectual vigour. Though, perhaps, this as a general position may admit of modifications, it is certain that Burke, from even boyish days, manifested a distinguished superiority over his contemporaries. He was the pride of his master, who foreboded every thing great from his genius.

He regarded his preceptor with a respect and gratitude which did honour to both. For near forty years that he went annually to Ireland, he travelled many miles to pay him a visit. Mr. Shackleton lived to a good old age, and was succeeded by his son, Mr. John Shackleton, under whom the school continued to flourish. From Mr. John Shackleton it descended to his son, Mr. Abraham Shackleton, who is its present master, with no less reputation and success than his father and grandfather.

Burke's brother, Richard, who abounded in vivacity and pointed wit, was by many esteemed, in their boyish days, the abler of the two: as among superficial judges boys are rated according to the vivacity, not the *force* of their intellectual qualities and operations; by the quickness of the vegetation more than the value of the production. Hence the fruits of ripened manhood are often very different from the appearance of juvenile blossom.

Of the comparative merits of the two brothers, both their master and father entertained a very different opinion from that which others had conceived. They allowed that Richard was bright, but maintained that Edmund would

be wise. The event justified their opinion. Richard was lively and pungent; Edmund perspicacious, expansive, and energetic. Of the two, Richard would have been the better writer of epigrams, Edmund of epic poetry.

Leaving school, he was sent to Dublin College, and was cotemporary with Goldsmith. Goldsmith, in conversation, often asserted that Burke did not render himself very eminent in the performance of his academical exercises. This assertion has been confirmed by others, and never contradicted. When we consider the immense extent and variety of his knowledge, we may fairly infer, that even in his youth he must have laid in great stores, though without display. That many young men of talents are at College eclipsed by more emulous inferiors in established exercises is certainly true: that they themselves and their fellow students, and even their masters, estimate general ability by a specific direction, often happens. Imperfect knowledge will apply erroneous criteria, and consequently draw wrong conclusions. By many, not only boys but men, talents are rated by the facility of combining Latin and Greek syllables in a certain order, instead of the facility of knowing and explaining difficult and important truths. But penetration will discover talents, though not employed in customary details.

It is of the greatest importance in a history

of an extraordinary mind; to mark, as far as possible, the progression of its powers, exertions, and attainments; the discipline or direction which may have had an effect on them; *quibus initiis quo progressu, usque eo creverit*. What was chiefly attended to at Dublin when he was at the University was the logic of the schools. Locke's Essay had not made its way in that College so completely as to expel the Aristotelian system. The vigorous and penetrating mind of Burke, even in his juvenile years, saw the absurdity of the scholastic jargon, and slighted it as much as his friend Johnson had formerly done the lectures of his Oxford tutor. Men of great talents, both those who have been placed at universities and those who have not, after the elementary studies, chiefly form themselves; and, in following the plans of their own choice, often neglect those of prescription. Johnson, though proud of his College, did not devote himself to academical exercises with a zeal and perseverance proportionate to his genius. Dryden at Cambridge obtained no honorary degree. High as these men are, to rise much higher, Milton was not peculiarly ambitious of College distinction. Bacon, when his cotemporaries were exercising themselves in the controversies of Aristotelian logic, and striving for victory in moods and figures, was engaged in proving the futility of the dialectics of the schools, and in finding out

a certain road to truth. Common minds pursue the beaten tract : great genius either FINDS or MAKES A WAY.

It was by this untrammelled exertion of his own powers, that Burke's juvenile studies at once enriched, invigorated, and expanded his mind. In recording his pursuits at College, I do not mean to recommend them to the imitation of young readers ; nor to derogate from the utility of the modes established in any of the universities of these kingdoms.— Systems of education are to be estimated by their tendency and effect in forming and directing the powers of ordinary young men, not of such as rarely appear in an age.

Mathematics were also much attended to at Dublin. Although Burke applied himself so much to that branch of study as to give him a competent knowledge of those parts that were most subservient to the purposes of life, there is no evidence that he devoted himself to the more abstruse and profound parts of the science. It is probable, that, had he studied at Cambridge, he might have, according to the language of that university, not taken one of the first degrees. It is not likely that he might not have been beyond a *senior optimo* ; whilst the degree of *wrangler* would have been reserved for men of inferior talents, but more emulously diligent in the performance of prescribed

tasks, and in the acquirement of a prescribed knowledge. His genius was too powerful to be stimulated by the common motive of emulation. Emulation can only operate where there is an approach to equality. Among many men of great ability, how few there are to be found in a century who approach to an equality to Edmund Burke. He gained no prizes, for he sought none. His mind was of too enlarged and original a cast, to be directed in its exertions by merely preceded studies; it formed itself. It is well ascertained, that though he paid no more attention to his College exercises than was merely necessary to avoid censure, while at the university, pursuing his own plans, he acquired a very extensive knowledge of physical and moral nature. Logic he also studied in the efficacious mode which Bacon pointed out. Pneumatology, in general, occupied a considerable portion of his attention. While attending to acquirement he was not negligent respecting the means of communication. He studied rhetoric and composition as well as logic, physic, history, and moral philosophy.

In the year 1749, Lucas, a demagogue apothecary, wrote a number of very daring papers against Government, and acquired as great popularity at Dublin as Mr. Wilkes afterwards did in London. Burke, whose principal attention had been directed to more important ob-

jects than the categories of Aristotle, perceived the noxious tendency of levelling doctrines. He wrote several essays in the style of Lucas, imitating it so completely as to deceive the public:—pursuing Lucas's principles to consequences obviously resulting from them, and at the same time shewing their absurdity and danger. The first literary effort of his mind was an exposure of the absurdity of democratical innovations. This was the *Ticinus* of our political Scipio.

It has been often said that he was bred a Catholic, and studied at St. Omers. To his supposed education many of his political measures have been ascribed: particularly to his popish institution were imputed his opposition to the Protestant associations in 1780 and his endeavour to effect Catholic emancipation in Ireland. But the fact ascertained and admitted is, that he never studied at St. Omers, nor at any popish or even foreign seminary. He was bred a Protestant, and always continued a member of the Episcopal church, although he entertained a very high opinion of the Dissenters, and a particular esteem for the Catholics.

Among the various literary studies to which his genius was directed, pneumatology, as we have said, was one. Philosophers, indeed, have generally considered man in his individual powers, before they have followed these powers through their operation in the various relations

and engagements of social life. They have analysed the mind before they ascertained what affections or actions of it were useful or hurtful. Anatomy preceded preventives, regimen, and medicine. This has been the case both with philosophy and philosophers. Pneumatics have been studied before ethics: Xenophanes went before Socrates; Hutchinson's Analysis of the Passions was written before his Moral Philosophy. The study, indeed, of man's nature in the abstract is, perhaps, more within the reach of a young man, than the study of it in its operations amidst the complicated engagements and duties of society.

Burke, in his youth, bestowed much attention on logic and metaphysics in general, and applied himself with particular diligence to the investigation of Berkley's and Hume's systems.

While employed in treasuring up a profound knowledge to render himself useful, he did not neglect the means of rendering himself agreeable in the intercourse of life. To the learning of a scholar he added the manners of a gentleman. His company was sought among the gay and fashionable, for his pleasing conversation and deportment, as much as among the learned for the force and brilliancy of his genius, the extent and depth of his knowledge. He had that great art of good breeding which rendered the members of the company pleased

with him and themselves. He had an inexhaustible fund of discourse, either serious or merry, with wit and humour, poignant, strong, delicate, sportive, as answered the purpose or occasion. He had a vast variety of anecdotes and stories, which were always well adapted and well told; a constant cheerfulness and high spirits. His looks and voice were in unison with the agreeableness, insinuation, and impressiveness of his conversation and manners.

But though the object of regard and admiration in his native country, he did not see much chance of acquiring in it an independent situation. Ireland, though often the mother of geniùs, is rarely its nurse. Burke, seeing little prospect of soon raising himself in his own country, made his first essay to attain permanent employment in another. Soon after he had finished academical studies, a vacancy took place in the professorship of Logic at Glasgow. A considerable intercourse had long subsisted between the universities of Glasgow and Dublin, owing, probably, in some measure to their local position, but in a great degree to the fame of the eminent Hutchinson, who had been educated at Dublin, and always retained a close intercourse with Ireland.

Burke, conscious of his metaphysical knowledge, applied for the professorship; but too late. Had he been successful, the Logic chair of Glasgow would have been still more eminent

than the Moral Philosophy chairs of Glasgow and of Edinburgh: though the former have been filled by a Hutchinson, Smith, and Reid; the latter has been occupied by a Fergusson, and is now by a Stewart. Burke had planned a confutation of the Berkleian and Humean hypothesis; but the active engagements of politics afterwards prevented the completion of his speculative disquisitions.

Disappointment of early views has been the means of advancement to several eminent men of modern times. Dr. Fergusson was disappointed in an application for an inconsiderable living in an obscure part of Scotland. Had he been successful, taken up with the duties of his profession, his literary and philosophical talents might have been lost to the world.

Had Dr. Johnson become master of the Staffordshire school, talents might have been consumed in the tuition of boys which Providence formed for the instruction of men. The chair which Burke desired to fill would have been favourable to philosophical effort.

Whether, on the whole, his mind might not have been employed as usefully for himself and for mankind, in the sequestered pursuits of literature, is a premature inquiry at this stage of his life; for, if a solvable question, the solution must depend on the effects arising from a different direction of his powers during more advanced periods.

We now know, that the time devoted by Bacon to philosophy was of infinitely superior utility to mankind to that which was occupied in public life. We know, that his political counsels were of much less efficacy, in the wise and successful reign of great Elizabeth, than those of men, who, though possessing considerable talents, were (as almost all men were that ever the world saw) very much inferior in genius to Sir Francis Bacon. As a judge, even had he in a moral view been blameless, he could have done no more than a person of merely a sound understanding, common learning, and professional knowledge, without either genius or philosophy. In the early part of Bacon's life it would have been premature to have determined, whether in a private or public capacity he might have been most beneficial to himself and to society.

Disappointed in Glasgow, Burke betook himself to London, where genius, if vigorously and assiduously exerted, and judiciously directed, seldom fails of ultimate success. —

On his first arrival in the metropolis, he entered himself of the Temple. Various accounts are given of his finances at the outset of life. It has of late been asserted that he began the world with a handsome competency, which he sunk by an adherence to a party. The term *handsome competency* being vague and indefinite, I cannot enter into a particular discussion of it; but it appears probable that it was not very

considerable when he came to London. This is a natural inference from the mode which he adopted soon after his arrival. When he had entered himself of the Temple, he submitted to the drudgery of regularly writing for daily, weekly, and monthly publications. It is not probable that a man, possessed of a competent subsistence in his own private fortune, would seek to earn money by hired writing for newspapers and magazines. But were we to admit that his circumstances were good, we should by no means, by the admission, exalt his merit: the more difficulties he had to combat, the greater force of mind was required to surmount them. To have begun the world in independent circumstances would not have added to his character.

In the *Preface to his Posthumous Works* it is stated by the learned Editor, that the family from which Burke was sprung had been ennobled in several of its branches. A reader of the *History of Ireland* will find that Bourke* was, in the last century, the family name of several peers of that kingdom. Of these, the most distinguished were the Marquis of Clanricarde and Viscount Clanmorris, extinct; and Lord Brittas, forfeited. It is probable, that these noble families were branches of that of

* The name of Burke or Bourke was held in high esteem by the ancient Irish.

Bourke—Lord Bourke. The only titled Bourke of the present age is the Earl of Mayo. Burke is believed to have descended from the same root. I do not mention these circumstances with a view to emblazon native genius by heraldry. Edmund Burke must have conferred much more lustre upon any family than he could have derived from it. But as readers are generally curious to know something of the descent of a subject of biography, I think it my duty to state facts where they can be known; and, where they cannot, the most probable and generally received opinions. I am assured by Dr. Lawrence, that Burke's grandfather possessed an estate of three thousand a year, near Limerick, which was confiscated. This event may have been the means of stimulating the talents of his son, and perhaps the genius of his grandson.

To periodical publications he contributed essays on various subjects of general literature and particular politics. These essays, though uniting information, reasoning, invention, and composition, much beyond contemporary writers, did not immediately enable their author to emerge from obscurity. Patronage does not always follow literary merit: if it do, it comes rarely when most wanted—before fame has secured success. Those who are most willing to be the patrons of learning are not always the most capable of appreciating merit, and are

often misled by dependants, whose own place in their esteem would suffer by a just appreciation. Besides, the love of obsequiousness and flattery is very frequently the motive to patronage. Adulation and servility inferior retainers to letters will readily pay; while to such arts conscious intellect will not stoop. Such, therefore, often fail of the protection of the great. A Cibber will be admitted by a patron who excludes a Johnson.

The profits of Burke's writings were at first small. The earliest offerings of literature must be to fame; from fame follows emolument.

He frequently passed his leisure hours in the company of Mrs. Woffington. This several of his detractors have endeavoured to make a subject of ridicule. But it is certain that this lady's conversation was no less anxiously courted by men of wit and genius, than by men of pleasure. It is equally certain that he was, on the whole, a man of great temperance. Whether he was so completely chaste as to resist the attractions of that engaging woman, I cannot affirm. If instead of standing candidate for being professor of Logic at Glasgow, he had applied for orders in the kirk, and Mrs. Woffington had been within its jurisdiction, an inquiry would have probably been instituted; but as that was not the case, I have no means of satisfying the curious in that branch of biography. Whatever may have been his occa-

sonal avocations, he in the Temple applied himself with the most vigorous industry to writing essays and increasing his knowledge. Applying to learning and science in general, the studies to which he gave himself up with the most peculiar zeal were those which unfolded human nature,—history, ethics, politics, pneumatology, poetry, and criticism. His health was gradually impaired by this intense application, and an alarming illness ensued. He resorted for medical advice to Dr. Nugent, a physician of great talents and skill, and of no less benevolence. The Doctor considering that the noise, and various disturbances incidental to chambers, must impede the recovery of his patient, kindly offered him apartments in his own house. Attention and tender treatment, not from the Doctor only, but all the family, had soon a more powerful effect in producing the restoration of his health than any medicines. Among the most attentive to her father's patient and guest was Miss Nugent, whose general amiableness and particular tenderness to himself soon excited a passion in the sensible heart of Burke. He offered her his hand, which she accepted; and, during a long life of various vicissitudes and trying situations, had, in her soothing and affectionate conduct, every reason to rejoice at his lot.

Hitherto his mental powers and acquirements were but partially known. The exertion of his

literary talents had been confined to detached essays. His first acknowledged production is his *Vindication of Natural Society*

This performance is an important object to his biographers, as it marks the sound principles of religion, philosophy, and politics, which he had early formed. By an ironical vindication of natural society, in preference to artificial or political, he exposes the false philosophy of Bolingbroke, which, he thinks, had a tendency to overturn virtue, and every established mode of religion and of government. The scepticism of that author had hitherto infected only men of rank or literature. It was reserved for Paine to simplify infidelity to the capacities of unlettered men. The disciples of Bolingbroke considered his notions as applying to theology only; they did not foresee that the same engines that were employed for the destruction of religion, which they did not regard, might be used for the subversion of government, the annihilation of their privileges, and the forfeiture of their property, which they did regard.

The tendency of religious scepticism to produce political confusion was discovered by the penetrating genius of a Burke. He endeavoured to turn sceptics to sound thinking, by shewing that, if false philosophy became general, it would ultimately destroy their rank, consequence, and property. In his ironical attack upon ar-

tificial society, he purposely employs the common-place mode of unfair reasoning. He argues from incidental abuses against the several forms of political society. . . . Though he intentionally draws a wrong conclusion from his statement of existing abuses, the statement itself is very eloquent, and not much overcharged. Pretending to prove that, because wars often take place between political societies, political society itself is bad, he draws a very striking and glowing picture of the horrors of war, and enters into a particular detail of the butcheries arising from the enmities of men. He gives a summary of the effects of the proceedings of Sesostris, Semiramis, and other conquerors, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Grecian, and Roman; the northern swarm, the Saracens, Tartars, and those of more modern times, in the bloodshed and devastation that they have caused. "From (says he) the earliest dawnings of policy to this day, the invention of men has been sharpening and improving the mystery of murder, from the rude essays of clubs and stones, to the present perfection of gunnery, canoneering, bombarding, mining, and all other species of artificial, learned, and refined cruelty, in which we are now so expert, and which make a principal part of what politicians have taught us to believe is our principal glory." He ironically imputes the evils he has detailed to political society, alledging

that, if men were not so associated, it would have been impossible to find numbers sufficient for such slaughters agreed in the same bloody purpose. "How far then nature would have carried us, we may judge by the examples of those animals who still follow her laws, and even of those to whom she has given dispositions more fierce, and arms more terrible, than ever she intended we should use. It is an incontestible truth, that there is more havock made in one year by men, of men, than has been made by all the lions, tygers, panthers, ounces, leopards, hyenas, rhinoceroses, elephants, bears, and wolves, upon their several species since the beginning of the world, though these agree ill enough with each other."

He goes over the various forms of political society, mentioning their defects; in perfect imitation of sceptical philosophy, pulling them down, and building no other systems in their place. So complete is the irony, that to many, not acquainted with such disquisitions, he would appear to be seriously inveighing against established government. Some modern democrats might suppose that he was supporting the doctrines of one of their apostles. The following passage, among many others, very happily imitates the declamation of anarchists. "But with respect to you, ye legislators, ye civilizers of mankind, ye Orpheuses, Moseses, Minoses, Solons, Thescuses, Lycurguses, Numas!—

with respect to you, be it spoken, your regulations have done more mischief in cold blood than all the rage of the fiercest animals, in their greatest terrors or furies, has ever done, or ever could do." Such opinions so much resemble those of disorganizing speculators, that many parts of the *Vindication of Natural Society against Artificial Societies*, if taken seriously, as some readers might take it, would appear intended to prove *speculatively* what the *Vindication of the Rights of Nature, in opposition to the Usurpation of Establishment*, RECOMMENDS TO PRACTICE.

The *Vindication of Natural Society* displays at once the extent of his knowledge, in the historical statements; the versatility of his genius, in the happy imitation of Bolingbroke; and the force of his sagacity, in perceiving, though hitherto unguided by experience, the tendency of scepticism to dissolve the bands of society. This essay is evidently the production of a mind of no ordinary portion of talents, but of talents not yet quite arrived at their zenith.

His first acknowledged literary work did not meet with so great success as its ingenuity deserved. Like the paradoxes of the Vicar of Wakefield's son, it neither excited much praise or blame: like Hume's first effort, it fell *dead-born* from the press, but was afterwards revived by its younger brothers.

Burke was still a student in the Temple;

but although no man could be more completely master of law, either in its details, or general principles, as a subject of moral and political history and science, yet he does not appear to have studied it with very great zeal as a profession. Hume informs us, in *his own Life*, that, though professing to study law, he found an insurmountable aversion to every thing but the pursuits of general learning. "While they (his friends) fancied I was poring over Voet and Vinnius, Cicero and Virgil were the authors I was secretly devouring." In the like manner, works of taste, genius, and philosophy attracted Burke more powerfully than usage, decision, and statute. Homer and Longinus occupied his mind more than Montesquieu and Littleton.

Soon after his *Vindication of Natural Society*, he published *an Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*, a work which shewed a genius much beyond that of common critics, and even of highly approved critics. In considering this essay, we are not to look for a *rhetorician enumerating constituents* of fine writing, but for a PHILOSOPHER TRACING PHENOMENA AND THEIR CAUSES in physical and moral nature. He not only collects and narrates facts, but investigates principles; he is not merely an experimental, he is a scientific critic. Longinus possessed more the genius of a poet than the investigating coolness of a philosopher. He illustrated and

exemplifies sublimity rather than unfolds its causes. In treating of the Sublime, Longinus includes the pathetic, and even the beautiful. His treatise affords less distinct instruction concerning the sublime in particular, than ideas concerning excellent composition in general.

Burke saw and proved the difference between the "sublime and beautiful," and considered each as connected with a branch of the pathetic: the former with the stronger and more violent passions; the latter with the milder and more pleasant. The sublime and beautiful, he shews, differ very essentially in constituents, effects, and causes.

To analyze a work so universally known as this essay would be superfluous: I shall therefore confine myself to its spirit, instead of following its detail. It will be generally allowed by readers conversant on such subjects, that the author displays a mind both "feelingly alive to each fine impulse," and able to investigate its own operations, their effects and causes. It unites Longinus and Aristotle. Burke is a philosophical anatomist of the human mind. In respect of taste and its objects, he is what Hutchinson is in respect to the affections, and Locke to the understanding—the first who by experiment and analysis investigated an important subject in pneumatology. Like those two profound philosophers, his account of phænomena is just and accurate,

though some of his theories may be incomplete and fanciful.

Whoever turns his attention to subjects of taste, must see that Burke's enumeration of the qualities which constitute sublimity and beauty is exact. Whoever is acquainted with literary history, must know that an analytical enquiry and scientific discussion of these subjects is *new*. Mr. Addison, indeed, in his *Spectators on the Pleasures of the Imagination*, describes grandeur and beauty in general ; but does not analyze either so as to give a clear view of constituents, much less to ascertain principles.

Many readers, who will admit the justness of Burke's account of qualities, may esteem some of his hypotheses incomplete. " Whatever (says he) is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime." That terror is a principal source he very clearly demonstrates, and ingeniously illustrates ; but in esteeming terrible objects, and those of analogous operation, the sole constituents of sublimity, he appears, like many men of genius, to be led too far by the love of system.

Like Pythagoras, he, in some cases, errs from the tendency of a great mind to generalization. There are many objects sublime

which are not terrible. Magnificence, vastness, force, constituents of sublimity, and included in his enumeration, excite either astonishment or admiration, sentiments not analogous to terror. A war-horse, a lofty and spacious building, are sublime without being terrible.

But though somewhat fanciful in parts of his theory, Burke is a perspicuous observer, and a philosophical investigator. In his detail of constituents he is accurate and comprehensive; in his assignation of efficient causes often just, sometimes imaginative, always acute and ingenious; in his reasoning on final causes profound, wise, and pious.

We may consider the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* in two lights,—as an addition to literature, and an exhibition of genius. It affords the greatest accession to the knowledge of a most important branch of pneumatology, and its appropriate objects, of any work which has yet appeared. Succeeding writers, who have rejected the theory, have done little more than copy the account of the phænomena.—It displays the learning of a scholar, the invention of a poet, and the wisdom of a philosopher. Johnson considered this work as a model of philosophical criticism. “We have (he said) an example of true criticism in Burke’s *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful*. There is no great merit in shewing how many plays have ghosts in them, or how this ghost is better

than that, you must shew how terror is impressed on the human heart."

Burke, from this work, soon became universally known and admired. The ignorant and superficial, from the subject, believed him to be a man of taste; the learned and the wise, from the execution, knew him to be a man of taste and profound philosophy.

On perusing Burke's book, his father was so enraptured as to send him a remittance of one hundred pounds;—from him a considerable sum, as he had not then got the estate, which afterwards descended to Edmund from an elder brother, and was far from being opulent. By this remittance, and the sale of his book, he was relieved from some pecuniary embarrassments, which pressed him at the time.

He began now to be known as a man of great genius and erudition. The publication of the *Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful* is a GRAND EPOCH in the literary history of Burke, as from it we may date the *commencement* of his eminence as a writer. This treatise is, therefore, not only an important accession to philosophy, an exertion of extraordinary genius, but a ground work of extraordinary fame.

In consequence of the manifestation of his intellectual powers, men of distinguished talents courted his acquaintance.

In reviewing the life of any man, it is often necessary to attend to those with whom he had

most frequent intercourse, whether private, literary, or political. Respecting the literary friends of Burke the public is indebted for much valuable information to Mr. Boswell's *Life of Johnson*; a book which, though it contains materials that might have been as well, for the reputation of the author and of his subject, left out, certainly is replete with useful and entertaining facts and observations. The history of Boswell himself, and of the family of Auchinleck, does not diminish the value of the many faithful transcripts of the mind and conversation of Johnson and his companions, of whom Burke was, beyond all others, the most highly admired. At this time his fellow student, Goldsmith, was in London, and was commencing his literary career. Goldsmith from Dublin had gone to Edinburgh, and studied physic. Afterwards he set out for the continent, and pursued his travels on foot, somewhat in the manner of the hero's son, George, in his novel of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, partly by demanding at universities to enter the lists as disputant, by which, according to the custom of many, if he acquitted himself well, he was entitled to a dinner, a bed, and a crown in money. He returned to England, and was employed successively as an usher to an academy, a corrector to the press, a reviewer, and a writer for newspapers. He assiduously cultivated the acquaintance of Johnson, and his faculties were

gradually enlarged by the contemplation of that great man. "His mind," says Boswell, probably expressing from recollection the opinion of Johnson, "resembled a fertile but thin soil: there was a quick, but not a strong vegetation of whatever chanced to be sown. No deep root could be struck. The oak of the forest did not grow there, but the elegant shrubbery and the fragrant parterre."

In Johnson's commendation of Goldsmith, prefatory to the *Life of Parnell*, there is nothing inconsistent with this opinion. He praises him for doing well whatever he attempted, which does not imply that he either attempted or performed any very great or difficult work.

Mr. (Sir Joshua) Reynolds and the Colossus of English literature sought the acquaintance of the Author of the *Sublime*. Intimate friendship soon succeeded his acquaintance with both. Mr. Reynolds's house was the favourite resort of men of talents. Among the ingenious and wise of his own countrymen, Johnson stood "like Saul among the people." Indeed, among many eminent for literary talents, the three kingdoms afforded each a man exalted above the rest:—Johnson, Hume, and Burke. Johnson, from the commencement of their acquaintance, discovered in Burke that extraordinary genius and knowledge which the world afterwards saw. He declared he was the greatest man living, and that if you were to be driven

to seek shelter from a shower of rain under the same gateway with him, you must in a few minutes perceive his superiority over common men. This observation shewed not only Johnson's exalted idea of Burke's treasures, but also of his powers of communication. He saw there was in him not only a surprising general facility of communicating and applying his intellectual stores, but a wonderful versatility in adapting his explanations and discourses to the subject, and to the capacity of the hearers." "If (said he) Burke were to go into a stable, and talk for a short time with the ostlers, they would venerate him as the wisest man they had ever seen." Indeed, in every company, of whatever rank or capacity, he poured out his mind; but it was not the display of pedantry, it was the effusion of fulness.

How greatly Johnson delighted in convivial meetings, and how he relished the attractions of a tavern, and enjoyed that unrestrained conversation which it admits much more than domestic parties, is well known. A weekly club was instituted for his gratification, and for the instruction and entertainment of its several members. The place of meeting was the Turk's-head, Gerrard-street, Soho; the time every Monday, at seven in the evening. The club, at its institution, consisted of the following members: Johnson, Burke, Goldsmith, Reynolds, Mr. Topham Beauclerc, Dr. Nu-

gent, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Chamier, Mr. Bennet Langton.

Mr. Beauclerc united to the character of a man of parts, information, and taste, that of the man of fashion. Having spent much time in Italy, he improved his natural taste for the fine arts by the contemplation of the most exquisite models. With classical literature, history, and antiquities, he was beyond most men acquainted. His conversation was variegated—learned, witty, generally gay, sometimes serious, and always polite,—admirably adapted for diffusing pleasure over a company. He was a great collector of books, and at his death left a library which yielded upwards of five thousand pounds. Though dissipated, his many amiable and respectable qualifications rendered him a great favourite with Burke and Johnson. Nugent was a physician, well esteemed for professional talents, general information, and agreeable manners. He was father-in-law to Burke.

Hawkins is since known as the executor and biographer of Johnson, and the historian of music. Chamier, though bred a stock-broker, had received a liberal education, was a good scholar, and particularly well versed in modern languages. Mr. Langton, a gentleman of Lincolnshire, of parts and knowledge, and from congeniality of religious and political notions, a

distinguished favourite with Johnson :—Reynolds, long before that time eminent for his genius and skill :—Goldsmith, rising to literary renown. Far above others stood Burke and Johnson.

From this account it is evident that every member of the club was qualified to contribute a considerable portion of pleasing and useful conversation. This society was, in the talents and learning of its members, not inferior to the famed Scriblerus-club of the preceding age. Two of the number stand higher than Pope or Swift. The greatest admirers of the wit, humour, and genius of these two extraordinary men, will hardly consider them as equal to the capacity, fulness, powers, and exertion of Johnson ; to the force, versatility, expansion, richness, and invention of Burke. However much the world is indebted to the separate efforts of the members of this club, it does not appear that, like those of the Scriblerus, they employed their literary labours in any joint work. Indeed this is not difficult to account for : the leading men of the Scriblerus resembled one another in the *species* as well as *the degree* of their excellence ; whereas Johnson and Burke were as different from each other in the *species* and direction of their talents, as they were superior to most men in the degrees of their mental powers. But though the members of the Turk's-head did not unite

their talents in the production of any work, they derived very great advantages from mutual intercourse, communication of opinions, and the result of separate experience, closely examined and ably discussed. Though they did not join their talents in one work, they exerted themselves severally in the club, by speaking or writing on subjects of literature.

The members of the Turk's-head, like those of the Scriblerus club, very frequently unbent themselves by light amusements and frolics. A remark made on the latter may be equally applied to other literary societies. " They (the Scriblerus-club) often experienced the truth of Horace's observation, *Dulce est desipere in loco.* The time for wits to play the fool is when they meet together to relax from the severity of mental exertions. Their follies have frequently a degree of extravagance much beyond the phlegmatic merriment of sober dullness, and can be relished by those only who, having wit themselves, can trace the extravagance to the real source, and make a candid allowance for an effect arising from so noble a cause." *

The Turk's-head indulged themselves in agreeable trifling as well as important discussion. Goldsmith contributed no less to the

* See *Lives of the Authors of the Spectator*, published by G. Cawthorn, No. 132, Strand.

amusement of the club by his foibles and absurdities than to their entertainment by his abilities. Perhaps, indeed, there never was a man, the various traits of whose character were more inconsistent than those of Goldsmith,—never a more motely mixture of strength and weakness, clearness and confusion, knowledge and ignorance. Though capable of exhibiting human character naturally and humorously, either in a single essay or through a volume, he could not tell a story without murdering it. Although in continuous writings his views were clear, just, and comprehensive ; in occasional conversation he was perpetually falling into gross blunders. In his literary efforts, he pourtrayed nature, without deviating from truth : embellishing whatever he represented, * he produced whatever effect he desired. In company he always said or did something different from what he intended. The opponents of a nobleman of considerable talents affixed to him the name of Malagrida. This nobleman, it is well known, has been accused of insincerity and duplicity. Goldsmith being in company with him, and probably meaning to say to him that he wondered how people could apply to his Lordship the name of a man of fair character as a term of reproach, said, “ I am

* Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit.

Epitaph, Westminster Abbey.

surprised how they can call your Lordship Malagrida, Malagrida was an honest man."

Goldsmith valued himself very much on his *bon mots* ; and, were we to judge from his publications, we might conceive not without reason, but in conversation the point was lost. As he was extremely vain in general, he was peculiarly so in what concerned his colloquial powers, not only trying new jests, but repeating those he made in other companies ; and was much mortified if they did not produce the intended laugh. Hawkins, in his Life of Johnson, tells us that a common preface of Goldsmith to a story was, " I'll tell you a story of myself, which some people laugh at and some do not." One evening, as the company was breaking up, he told them if they would call for another bottle they should hear one of his *bon mots*. They agreed, and he began thus : " I was once told that Sheridan the player, in order to improve himself in stage gesture, had looking-glasses, to the number of ten, hung about his room, and that he practised before them ; upon which I said,—then there were ten ugly fellows together." The company not discovering much humour in this story, and perhaps wishing to mortify his anxious solicitude for praise, did not laugh. He went away in a great passion, without tasting the wine.

The members often amused themselves with making puns. Goldsmith was eager to try any means to attain praise ; and not only tried his

invention, but endeavoured to retail the puns he heard in other companies as his own. He had heard the pun about sending stale pease to Hammersmith, as that was the way to (turn'em green) Turnham-Green. Believing that pun new, he resolved to use it as his own, and at supper, pretending to think the pease too old, called to the waiter to send the pease to Hammersmith. "To Hammersmith; Sir?" "Yes, (says Goldsmith) that's the way to *make* them green." He was very angry that the company found no jest, blundering out, "it was a very good joke when I heard it last night." He affected the manner of Johnson; and the club, to vex him, called him Dr. Minor, giving to Johnson, as all must acknowledge he deserved among any Doctors, the appellation of Dr. Major. He was greatly affronted with the application of the title of Dr. Minor to him. Johnson had a custom of contracting the names of his friends, as Mund for Edmund. Goldsmith was much displeased with the contraction of Goldy as a diminution of his importance, and said, "I wish, Sir, you would not call me Goldy, but Dr. Goldsmith." His vanity extended even to his dress. He was as anxious to be thought well attired as an ignorant beau, or a boarding-school girl, but had no earthly taste in the choice of habiliments. He one day came to the club in a very glaring bloom-coloured coat, and strutted about,

looking at his clothes, and seemingly wishing them to attract the attention of the company. Some of them ridiculed his dress. He, to prove how wrong they were, said, "let me tell you, gentlemen, when my taylor brought home this coat, he begged of me to tell all my friends who made it." "Why (said Johnson) that was because he knew the strange colour would attract crouds to gaze at it, and thus they might hear of him, and see how well he could make a coat even of so absurd a colour."

By such frivolities did the author of *the Deserted Village*, of *the Vicar of Wakefield*, and *the Travellers*, often expose himself to men greatly his inferiors in intellectual powers.

In the club, Burke frequently amused himself with punning; but his efforts generally produced some resemblance of thought, imagery, or sentiment, not merely a play of words. One recorded by Boswell was on the mob chairing Wilkes. This being mentioned at the club, Burke made a small change in the words in which Horace describes Pindar's numbers:—*Fertur numeris lege solutis*. He (Pindar) is carried (by the force and rapidity of his genius) in numbers uncontrouled by law, (the rules of versification). Burke, instead of *numeris* made *bu-meris*. He (Wilkes) is carried on shoulders uncontrouled by law. Even here, besides the play of words, we see that he, though a friend to liberty, satirizes the licentiousness of a mob.

Burke, from the exuberance of his mind, took a considerable share in the conversation ; but was always unassuming and polite, listening with attention to the observations of others, and endeavouring to descend to an equality with every member. His manners and colloquial talents rendered him the delight and admiration of the company, but most of all of Johnson, who was the most capable of appreciating his excellence. He remarked, that whenever he was in company with Burke he went away more knowing and wiser than he came, and that every time they conversed, his mind was kept on the full stretch. The members of the club, and other friends of both, observed that Johnson never discoursed with greater animation and energy than when his powers were excited by Burke.

Soon after the institution of the club, Mr. Garrick, who had been on his travels, returned to England, and being well acquainted with most of the members; gave some intimation that he would be one of their number, supposing that the least hint of such a desire would be eagerly embraced. Johnson, who, though he loved Garrick, undervalued his profession, was offended at what he esteemed the presumption of an *offer* where he ought to have made a *request*. “ He will be one of us!—how does he know we will let him ? ” Burke, who equally regarded Garrick, and thought much more

highly of theatrical talents, wished he might be introduced ; but Johnson exclaimed, “ He will disturb us with his buffoonery.” Neither Burke, nor others, who were disposed to admit him, insisted on his admission ; so that he did not become a member immediately, but was afterwards received into the club. Sir John Hawkins, therefore, is inaccurate in his assertion, that Garrick was never elected. It is a matter of notoriety that he was chosen a member, and that he continued so to his death. Sir John states himself to have left it, because the hours were later than agreeable to him, and convenient to his family. Most men, who had taste and comprehension of intellectual excellence, would have, for such company, continued an hour or two longer, even though not altogether conformable to their usual practice, and the regulations of their family. To men of talents such company as Johnson and Burke would be a much higher treat than an opera or a ball to the frivolous votaries of fashionable amusements. According to Boswell, who very faithfully recorded whatever related to the club, Sir John, one evening, attacked Burke so rudely, that all the company testified their displeasure. At their next meeting they received Hawkins so coolly as to prevent his future visits.

Burke made considerable progress in a confutation of the visionary theories of Berkley and

and Hume concerning the existence of matter. Had not other objects withdrawn his attention from metaphysical discussions, it is probable he might have controverted more of Hume's positions, and followed him to ethics and religion. He was a rational christian ; and no man better understood the foundation of his faith, or could more ably defend it against attacks. His pen, if employed on the subject, must have produced an answer which even Hume could not have had the hardihood to disregard. But it belongs not to the biographer to expatiate into the regions of possibility, his province is to narrate facts. Politics soon occupied Burke's attention, so much as to leave little time for publications with which they had no immediate connection.

While studying the philosophy of Hume, he was not inattentive to a subject which occupied that illustrious man, to the much greater benefit of mankind. He became more intimately conversant with history in general, and the history of these realms in particular ; carrying his attention to more recent periods than those which our philosophical historian has described. He made himself master of our history, external and internal, from the revolution, in all its branches ; its great and increasing complications and varieties. In 1758, he proposed to Mr. Dodsley a plan of an ANNUAL REGISTER of the civil, political, and literary transactions of

the times. Mr. Dodsley acceded, and the work was carried on for several years, either by Burke, or under his immediate inspection. Afterwards, when he was immersed in active politics, it was conducted under his general superintendence, with only occasional exertions of his own genius. To ascertain what parts of the Annual Register were executed by Burke himself requires no very great degree of penetration in a reader. Although several writers for this publication were men of learning, it is easy to distinguish between the effects of men of lettered industry and of extraordinary powers.

He had, at an early period of his life, become connected in intimate friendship with Mr. Hamilton, known by the name of *Single-speech Hamilton*, from an uncommonly excellent speech which he *once* delivered in the House of Commons. As he never distinguished himself by any other display of eloquence in the *British senate*, his friend, Mr. Burke, has been supposed the author of that oration. What has served to confirm the public in this opinion is, that afterwards, when Mr. Hamilton went over as Secretary to Lord Halifax, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he prevailed on this Mentor to accompany him, and procured for him a pension on the Irish establishment of three hundred pounds a year. Mr. Hamilton distinguished himself by a *second speech* in the Irish parliament, on a motion of Administration for suf-

fering popish regiments to be raised in Ireland, for assisting Portugal against Spain. Burke was also supposed to be the composer of this speech. From being believed to have written in favour of employing papists as soldiers, a fiction arose that he was a papist himself. To give consistency to this fiction, it was reported that he had received his education and principles at St. Omers.

Those who were best acquainted with Hamilton and Burke, do not think that the latter composed any of the speeches spoken by the former. The talents of Hamilton, and his literary attainments, were very great, and fully adequate to the production of the speeches which he spoke. An ample fortune, however, precluding the necessity of forming habits of industry, and affording the means of pleasurable indulgence, to which he was prone, encouraged an indolence which kept his great talents from being vigorously exercised. At no period of his life was Burke addicted to dissipation. Of gaming he is said to have been so completely ignorant, that we are informed by an eminent countryman of his, that he hardly knew a single game at cards. To such a mind the resources were so abundant as to render unnecessary the aid of pictured pasteboard.

The time was now approaching when his talents were to be displayed on the great political theatre. He returned to England.

His pension exempted him from the constant necessity of frittering his genius in ephemeral productions. He employed himself in collecting treasures of wisdom, especially moral and political knowledge and philosophy, attending at once to detail and generalization, fact and principle, usage and law. He still *occasionally* wrote political essays in periodical publications. The Public Advertiser was then the paper in which men of literature and genius most frequently contributed their efforts. Burke's writings in that journal attracted the notice of that worthy nobleman, the Marquis of Rockingham, who remarked their uncommon ability, and soon sought the acquaintance of the author. He was introduced to the Marquis by Mr. Fitzherbert, father of Lord St. Helens. This may be considered as a *grand epoch* in the life of Burke, as from it commenced his political career.

As he is soon to make his appearance in a different situation from what he has hitherto occupied, it may not be improper to take a view of his intellectual and moral character during a life solely literary, and that could not yet be called political. As a man of genius and learning he had established his reputation, and was ranked in a very high class. His Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful had displayed extraordinary powers, both of invention and research. His periodical performances marked at once

accuracy and multiplicity of knowledge, extent of views, and variety and appropriation of language. His conversation was equally instructive, pleasing, and entertaining. His moral character was as amiable and respectable as his intellectual was admirable. His integrity was unimpeached. Every action appeared to flow from benevolence. To render those with whom he consorted happy was the leading object of his conduct. His behaviour was delicate, insinuating, and engaging. The softness of his manners tempered the lustre of his genius. His temper was mild, sweetness and sensibility marked his countenance. There had not yet appeared that excessive irritability, that phrenzy of passion, which the contentions of the senate afterwards drew forth. The sparks were latent antecedent to the collision of party contest. The inflammable particles caught not fire previous to parliamentary concussion. In the thinner atmosphere of literary seclusion, those combustibles evaporated, which, in the denser medium of active politics, burst out in lightning and thunderbolts. In his circumstances, he, though very far from being opulent, was, by his intellectual labours, dependent only on his genius. He surpassed most men not only in knowledge and powers, but in readiness of exertion and vigour of persevering industry. His talents, with his habits of exercise, and the terms he could command, from

the estimation in which he was held, were sufficient to insure him an independent income. Such was his state in respect of talents, habits, temper, and the means of independence. Such was the stock he carried with him when he betook himself to politics. By the probable effects of his qualifications, if exclusively devoted to literary efforts, compared with their actual effects, principally devoted to public affairs, is his removal from the closet to the senate to be deemed fortunate or unfortunate to himself and to mankind.

To enable us to comprehend the conduct of a political actor, it is necessary to take a view of public affairs at the commencement of his agency, and to remark their progress and variations during its continuance.

When Burke first entered on the business of the nation, clouds were gathering over the political atmosphere,—clouds which, if they did not portend a certain storm, rendered its approach probable. In the East, indeed, there was sun shine ; over-head the sky was overcasting ; in the west it lowered : *res in oriente prosperæ, in occidente minaces*. Internally, discontents were prevalent ; in the American colonies, disaffection rapidly spreading.

Soon after the commencement of this reign, a spirit of opposition to Government was rising to disloyalty and turbulence. The resignation of a Minister of uncommon talents, vigour, de-

cision, and success, displeased the public. Deprived of his invigorating influence and wise direction, it was apprehended the counsels of Government would become imprudent and feeble. Although the career of success not only continued undiminished, but was increased, victory was imputed to the adoption of his plans by persons unable themselves to frame wise measures. With the fame and popularity of his predecessor, national prejudice concurred in rendering Lord Bute odious to the natives of England. Pitt was a Minister of extraordinary abilities; little merit would have been found in a successor even from England. The place of his nativity, independent of the virtues of his predecessor, would have been found sufficient to attach demerit to a Scotchman. The avowed reason for dislike to the Scotch Minister was, that the liberty of the country was in danger, from his principles and conduct.

The Earl of Bute was certainly not indebted to superiority of capacity for his exaltation. His talents, though not contemptible, were by no means great; his attainments were such as moderate parts can easily reach. He was a good classical scholar; he was tolerably well versed in those experimental details in natural history, physics, chemistry, botany, and astronomy, which frivolous minds dignify with the name of philosophy. But neither in natural, moral, or political knowledge, were his views

enlarged. In his principles of government he was arbitrary ; in his disposition proud : he was ambitious far beyond his capacity ; and, though of a decent moral character, by no means agreeable in his manners. He was thought tinctured with the dissimulation and artifice by which common minds often attempt to supply the want of great talents. By these means he was supposed to have come into power, and from the manifest earnestness with which he sought to disgust men of distinguished abilities and of popular principles, was believed to have formed a plan of governing the country by mere court favouritism. Far inferior to Pitt in powers, far inferior to the Duke of Newcastle in popular deportment, he was, by the majority of the nation, at once hated and disregarded. His talents were too trifling to enforce veneration ; nor did he, by an engaging demeanour, endeavour to win affection. His measures soon increased the odium which his character had excited. A determined resolution appeared to elevate the friends of arbitrary power, and degrade the supporters of freedom. To his internal measures his external joined in stirring up discontent. A peace, made on much less advantageous terms than believed attainable, in the hour of universal victory, heightened the outcry. To inflame popular discontent, leaders are never wanting. Abuse of the minister extended to abuse of his country, and

rose to abuse of the royal family, and of the Sovereign himself. The King was represented as deviating from the principles and conduct of his two predecessors, and likely to imitate the despotic measures of the house of Stuart. He had been educated by an arbitrary tutor, and was apprehended by many to have imbibed the same principles himself. The *virtual* dismissal, first, of the greatest and most popular minister of the century; and, afterwards, of the Whig connections, made room for the tutor to be his minister, and added to the apprehension. Courtiers, indeed, asserted that, whereas his two predecessors had devoted themselves to one party, the present King was resolved to be of none. The Whigs replied, that the two former Kings had chosen their ministers from those who maintained the principles to which they owed their throne; but that Bute maintained the principles, by the explosion of which the present family came to the crown. From these circumstances, it was inferred by the Opposition, that the Sovereign himself must have a predilection for unlimited monarchy. In many subordinate departments North Britons were appointed to serve. According to popular speakers, writers, and their votaries, the promotion of Scotchmen portended the downfall of English freedom. National prejudice represented the Scotch, in *general*, as unfriendly to liberty. The character of their patron

rendered this charge not improbable, as to the creatures of Lord Bute in particular. Hatred of Bute and his countrymen became so prevalent as to be reckoned a characteristic of an English patriot. Writings in abundance fanned the flame—writings of all descriptions, from the vulgar ribaldry of ballads to the lively wit and plausible declamation of Wilkes, and the keen, poignant satire of Churchill. Lord Bute, wherever he went, was received with the most flagrant marks of contempt and hatred. Finding that court favour was too feeble a shield against the strong attacks of popular detestation, he retired from office. The resignation of Lord Bute did not appease the people. Their favourite orators and writers persuaded them that he was still the acting, though not the ostensible minister. It was generally believed that there was an interior cabinet, from which the responsible officers of state were obliged to receive directions. Popular writers persevered in their invectives against the Court. One of the most violent of anti-ministerial publications was the *North Briton*.

Mr. Wilkes, member for Aylesbury, was more distinguished for pleasantry and colloquial talents, than for vigour of genius, eloquence, or political knowledge ; more fitted for entertaining and diverting a company, than for informing and instructing a senate. His dissipation, to which his companionable qualities probably

contributed, had greatly involved his circumstances. His profligate disregard of every thing that was sacred, virtuous, or decent, had ruined his character. In this situation, he had applied to Lord Bute for some employment which might enable him to extricate himself from his difficulties. His character was so notorious, that Bute, who professed a great regard for religion, and especially for the established church, could not with any decency patronize him, though a man who, from his principles and desperate fortunes, might have easily been rendered the willing tool of any designs, however arbitrary. Disappointed, Wilkes, in revenge, resolved to pour out invectives against ministry, and established the *North Briton* for that purpose. The observations were so trite, vague, and superficial, that Lord Bute did not appear, for a considerable time, to pay any attention to the work. After his resignation, No. 45 was so audacious as to pour out the most false and scurrilous abuse against the Sovereign himself. Silent contempt would have suffered this paper speedily to pass into merited oblivion; but the imprudent eagerness of ministry to punish its author, raised both the paper and him to a notice which, probably, neither would have otherwise attained. Wilkes had before been little known, except for his profligacy: the ministers raised him to eminence. His fortune had been entirely ruined by vice and extrava-

gance: the prosecution paved the way to opulence. Discontent was already very great; the proceedings against him made it spread with astonishing rapidity.

Lord Mansfield, by far the ablest of those members who generally supported Government, was averse to the prosecution of Wilkes: "I am," said he, "decidedly against the prosecution: his consequence will die away, if you let him alone; but by public notice of him, you will increase that consequence—the very thing he covets, and has in full view."

The resentment, however, of the court overcame sound policy. The ministers, by apprehending him on a general warrant, overstepped the boundaries of law. This deviation from legal precision (though frequently preceded, according to Blackstone, in extraordinary cases), was construed, by the popular leaders and their followers, to be a flagrant invasion of constitutional rights, and a justification of their fears respecting the arbitrary designs of the Court. Indeed, not the popular leaders only, but one of the first sages of the law, Lord Chief Justice Pratt (afterwards Camden), considered the apprehension as illegal. Even many of those, who, before, had been well disposed towards Government, were seized with the contagion, and joined with its most violent opponents, in associating the ideas of **WILKES AND LIBERTY**. Wilkes took advantage of this de-

lusion. It was a remark often made by him to his intimates, "That the public was a goose, and that a man was a great fool not to pluck a feather." He set up a printing-press, published the proceedings against him at one guinea a copy, and considerably bettered his finances. Many men, of real talents and virtue, thought it a duty of patriotism to support, when oppressed, a man, whose private profligacy they abhorred. Perhaps they might reason on the principle so ably maintained by Cæsar, in his speech on the discovery of Catiline's conspiracy, that deviations from established law are more dangerous when they regard worthless, than worthy characters, as the wickedness of the individual may draw away the attention of men from the arbitrariness of the measure; and thus the illegal act more easily steal into a precedent. The persecution of Wilkes was one of the principal causes of the internal discontents, which marked the early part of the present reign. The infamous *Essay on Woman*,* his expulsion from the House of Commons, the prosecution

* Accompanied by notes, stated in the title-page to be the production of Bishop Warburton; for which the Lords prosecuted Wilkes, as guilty of a breach of their privileges. The pretended imputation of obscene writing to a Bishop of high character had not even the merit of originality. The Latin poems, intituled *MEURSUS*, as obscene and profane as the *Essay on Woman* (with infinitely more wit, in fine language, and very elegant verse), were so called from a German Bishop, of very great sanctity and virtue.

of the Lords, the indictments for blasphemy from the inferior courts, and the demands of his creditors, concurred in driving him to exile. He might himself have been forgotten, had not subsequent injustice, at the instance of another ministry, rekindled the popular flame. But, though Wilkes was descending to oblivion, the dissatisfaction was by no means subsiding. The proceedings respecting the infamous Essay were not attributed to a laudable zeal in favour of piety and morality, but to resentment against a person who had exposed the measures of ministry, and was likely to receive, from the laws of his country, satisfaction for their illegal conduct. The Essay had not been published: a nobleman, once the intimate companion of Wilkes, and not more distinguished than he for virtue and holiness, procured a copy, from the confidence of friendship, and was the discoverer.* Many of the most important measures of the legislature and executive government, many of the most important questions discussed in the courts of justice, were either derived from the proceedings of Wilkes and his abettors, or with them and their consequences intimately connected. These, there-

* Happy (says the witty Earl of Chesterfield, in one of his letters to his son) is it for this nation, that God hath been pleased to raise up, in Mr. Wilkes, a patriotic defender of our rights and liberties; and, in the Earl of Sandwich, so zealous a defender of our religion and morals!

fore, must be held in view, by all who would judge impartially of the great political actors.

While discontent was spreading in England, disaffection much more formidable was fast increasing in America, which, if party at home did not engender, it certainly nourished. The discontent of America had its origin in a new system adopted by Government. This was, to raise, by authority of Parliament, a revenue from the colonies, which had hitherto taxed themselves. The system may be traced back to the administration of Lord Bute ; an administration, which, combined with his subsequent influence, and the influence of those who imbibed his sentiments, has been the source of very momentous consequences to this country. One branch of the policy by which Bute thought his plans of government likely to be most effectually carried into execution, was to keep up a much larger peace establishment of the army than formerly. To support this additional army, an additional revenue was necessary; the more difficult, as Britain was very much exhausted by the war recently concluded. Mr. George Grenville, the ostensible Prime Minister, had devoted much of his time and attention to finance, and was esteemed a very skilful financier. His skill, however, was directed more to the productiveness of the duty than the policy of the taxation. In devising various schemes of revenue, it appeared to him that

America, which had hitherto been left to tax herself, for her own internal establishments, should be obliged to contribute to the general support of the British empire. Several financial regulations of the British legislature, on that principle, respecting the American colonies, were, in America, represented as intolerable grievances in themselves, and as parts of a plan to invade the liberty and property of the colonies. This opinion was countenanced by some of the greatest men in both houses of parliament. Dissatisfaction, on each side of the Atlantic, was increased by reciprocal action and re-action. Notwithstanding the prevalence of such sentiments, at home and abroad, the Ministry proceeded with their plan of raising a revenue from America, and framed the famous *stamp-act*; an act which displayed great financial skill, “as it was * simple, practicable, and equitable in its operation, equally well adapted to all the colonies, and in its nature efficacious.” In America, objections were made, not merely to some of its details, but to the competency of the enactors. The right of the British parliament to impose taxes on colonies, not represented in it, was disputed with great warmth. Very strong remonstrances were transcribed, from the provincial assemblies to

* See Stedman's History of the American War, vol. i. p. 28, Introduction.

the King and Parliament. Resolutions were adopted, denying the right of Britain to impose taxes. Means were employed for forming a general combination, to prevent the measures of Government from taking effect. The resolutions of the Americans to oppose the stamp-act necessarily produced very great interruption to the commerce of this country. The mercantile sufferers joined with the political disapprovers of the scheme of taxation, and dissatisfaction with ministry was very general. Mr. Grenville became very unpopular through the nation, and was now no great favourite at court.

The dismissal of the Grenville Administration is said to have been owing principally to the following circumstance.—On an illness of the King, a plan was formed for a regency, should any of the Princes come to the crown while a minor. By this plan, the Princess of Wales had been left out. Whether this was an unintentional omission, or that the ministers did not think the interference of a female, advanced in years, necessary to the government of a great empire, while there were men fully competent, I do not know; but it was believed to have given great offence to the members of the interior cabinet, who, being better acquainted with her Royal Highness's talents, could more justly appreciate the value of her counsel. It must have been from the high sense which the King's friends, as they called themselves, en-

tertaind of the personal capacity of her Royal Highness, that they proposed her to be one of the council of regency ; as it certainly could be no reason for a relation assuming the reins of government for a minor, that the relation happened to be that minor's grandmother. The preterition of the Princess accelerated, if not caused, the dismissal of Ministry.

There were then two parties in opposition to Government,—Mr. Pitt's and the Duke of Newcastle's. From the age and infirmities of his Grace, the Marquis of Rockingham was considered as the acting leader. A favourable opportunity now offered itself to these parties, combining the principal ability and property of the kingdom, to overturn the system of court-favouritism ; but the jealousies of the leaders prevented an union so desirable to the friends of liberty and their country. Overtures were made by the Court, first, to Mr. Pitt ; but he boldly and patriotically insisted, that all the secret advisers, and their creatures, should be entirely excluded from any share in the direction of affairs. To this the Court would not altogether agree. Proposals were then made to the Marquis of Rockingham and the Duke of Newcastle, who, with their party, acceded to the offers of the Court. Lord Rockingham was appointed Prime Minister, and the Duke of Newcastle President of the Council. This hasty acceptance of office by the Rockingham party

displeased Pitt. It is morally certain, that if they had kept aloof for a short time, the joint force of their party and Pitt's would have compelled the court junto, no longer supported by Grenville and the Bedford interest, to suffer them to form an administration on whatever terms they pleased. Now Lord Rockingham was Minister, with upright intentions, public confidence; but without that support from all the friends of freedom which would have been necessary to render him independent of favouritism.

Such was the state of affairs when Burke began to devote his extraordinary talents to public affairs.

Of his first introduction to the Marquis, he himself gives an account in his speech. "In the year 1765, (he says) being in a very private station, far from any line of business, and not having the honour of a seat in this house, it was my fortune, by the intervention of a common friend, to become connected with a very noble person; then at the head of the Treasury department. It was indeed a situation of little rank and no consequence, suitable to the mediocrity of my talents and pretensions; but a situation near enough to enable me to see, as well as others, what was going on; and I did see in that noble person such sound principles, such an enlargement of mind, such clear and sagacious sense, and such unshaken fortitude,

as have bound me, as well as others much better, by an inviolable attachment to him from that time forward."

The Marquis offered to make Burke his own secretary, which he accepted. Mr. Hamilton was engaged with the opposite party, and claimed the assistance of Burke as his early friend. Various accounts have been given of the separation of these two gentlemen. Some have imputed it to a difference in political sentiments, others to a private quarrel; whereas neither was the cause. There was no diversity in their political opinions, which might not have been compromised; and they had no private quarrel. They separated on the following grounds, as I am assured by an intimate friend of both, a member of the present parliament; high in the public estimation, who often conversed with each on the subject; and, besides, saw a letter written by Burke to Hamilton, explaining the grounds and motives of his conduct. Burke, soon perceiving that the abilities which he, and all who knew him, admired in Hamilton, were not accompanied with the industry necessary to enable their possessor to rise high in the political world, often, both by word and letter, endeavoured to stimulate his friend to more exertion, but in vain. Finding his efforts ineffectual, he wrote a letter, the substance of which was an expostulation concerning Hamilton's indolence, reminding him

that he himself had a growing family to maintain, and must turn his talents to what would be useful ; and, on that account, that he must politically associate with men of more active exertions. This, I can aver, was the substance of the letter which explained the political separation of Hamilton and Burke ; a separation which, though it prevented the continuance of their close intimacy, never rose to a quarrel.

However expedient it might be for Burke to break off political intercourse with Hamilton, as a most profound admirer of his genius, I do not rejoice at the commencement of his connection with the Marquis of Rockingham. From that time he may be considered as a PARTY MAN. Burke ought not to have stooped to be the object of patronage. Like his friend Johnson, he should have depended entirely on his own extraordinary powers. He would have been able uniformly to act as his own genius prompted him, instead of employing his talents in giving currency to the doctrines of others—to have wielded his own club instead of a party distaff. In this part of their conduct, Johnson and Hume, the only two literary characters of the age who can be placed in the same rank with Burke, acted more worthily of the superiority with which they were blessed by nature. They attached themselves to no grandees: they did not degrade the native dignity of genius, by becoming retainers to the adventitious dig-

nity of rank. Johnson, in his garret, the abode of independence, was superior to Burke in his villa, the fee of a party. The former earned his subsistence by his labour, the latter received his by donative. Johnson was independent,—Burke dependent. Besides, the very extraordinary talents of Burke did not tend to promote party objects more effectually than good abilities, many degrees inferior to his, and mere knowledge of business, would have done. But had he been as superior to others in party skill, as in genius and knowledge, the fertility of his fancy and the irritability of his temper must often have prevented him from directing his skill steadily to the most useful ends. For so much irascibility a situation of contention was ill suited.

I am informed by the same friend of Hamilton and Burke, that the former gave an opinion concerning the latter, not undeserving of attention, as it illustrates some parts of his conduct.

“ Whatever opinion Burke, from any motive, supports, so ductile is his imagination, that he soon conceives it to be right.”

There are certainly some parts of his conduct, for which this alledged defect in his powerful mind would account more favourably to his sincerity, than his detractors have done. Guided by his imagination, his energetic understanding might have been led into erroneous

conclusions, which a common mind would have escaped. Bucephalus, if he had not been strongly reined and skilfully managed, would have run away with Alexander ; whilst a very ordinary rider of a common jade kept steadily on in the direct road.

Hamilton's opinion is certainly more honourable to Burke than that of those who assert that he changed his doctrines from corrupt motives ; but, I trust, it will, in the course of this narrative, appear that he did not change his doctrines ; but was, in the whole of his conduct, consistent. This is an opinion that will be firmly maintained by those who most accurately, minutely, and comprehensively examine his history. His imagination certainly operated very powerfully, and had a considerable influence on his opinions ; an influence, however, that, on every important subject, his reason vigorously controuled.

Mr. Hamilton used to observe, that Burke knew every subject of human knowledge except two—gaming and music. He said he was as ignorant of music as any pretended connoisseur in operas.

Burke, disapproving of Hamilton's party, would not join it, and, from a high spirit of equity, resigned the pension which Mr. Hamilton had procured for him, when he could not support the man by whom it had been obtained. This was a sacrifice to delicate integrity, which

not many in his circumstances would have made, the support of whatever measures Mr. Hamilton's party might adopt not being an express condition of the grant, though in Burke's refined sense of right implied. This authentic and important fact is a striking illustration of the honourable principles by which he was actuated.

During the Rockingham Administration he was chosen member of parliament for Wendover, in Buckinghamshire. This borough was dependent on Lord Verney, between whom and Burke a close intimacy subsisted, an intimacy concerning the pecuniary consequences of which the friends of the one and of the other gave very different accounts. These I shall notice in their proper place.

Burke, on his entrance into the House of Commons, employed himself in laying up stores of knowledge. He was of the same opinion with Cicero, that an orator ought to be acquainted with every great and important subject of art and nature. *Ac mea quidem sententia; nemo poterit esse omni laude cumulatus orator, nisi erit omnium rerum magnarum atque artium, scientiam consecutus.*

He prepared himself, not by devoting his principal attention to balancing periods, but by studying history, poetry, and philosophy; by storing his mind with facts, images, reasonings, and sentiments. He even applied himself to sub-

jects which do not *very often* occupy men of taste and science. He became intimately conversant with the writings of the fathers, and with the subtleties of school divines : with the principles and details of orthodoxy : the rise, progress, and effects of the manifold heresies : with the various means either of reason, or of force, employed for their disproof or extirpation. However frivolous so great a mind must have thought such distinctions and disputes in themselves, he deemed them of great importance in their operations, by illustrating the force, acuteness, and invention which the human mind can employ upon even frivolities or absurdities : and of great consequence in their effects ; since, during the prevalence of prejudice and ignorance, they had a most powerful influence on the happiness of society. Indeed such subjects often called forth powers of understanding equal to those which have been applied to the investigation of useful philosophy. In pitching a bar equal strength may be displayed as in carrying corn : in unproductive amusement, as in productive labour.

He attended especially to political knowledge and parliamentary usage. His industry was also exercised in making himself acquainted with old records, patents, and precedents ; so as to render himself complete master of office business, deeming no research too laborious, no attainment too minute, which was to

fit him for the discharge of his duty. His diligence was also employed in preparatory public speaking. He frequented the Robinhood society, to which many men of parts and information then resorted. He practised there the replies and contentions of eloquence; neglecting no means which he could devise for filling his mind, or facilitating his powers of communication. There was at that time in the society a baker of very considerable argumentative powers: with him Burke contended; and, by his own confession, derived very great advantage from the contest, in readiness of reasoning and expression. He bestowed great pains on the composition of his writings and speeches. Those intended for the public he, notwithstanding his copiousness of thought, imagery, sentiment, and fluency of appropriate language, revised, and sometimes rewrote. While he was devoting his mind to the intellectual part of eloquence, he did not neglect the mechanical. He paid considerable attention to the management of his voice and action, and to the whole of elocution: aware, that though delivery does not constitute eloquence, it, with many hearers, increases its effects. He often attended at the theatre, and acknowledged that he derived very great improvement in the art of speaking from Mr. Garrick. His manner, however, was less graceful and dignified than interesting, impressive,

and persuasive. He procured his seat in 1765. His first speech was at the opening of the ensuing session, and on the usual motion for an address. The principal subject was the stamp-act, and the consequent disturbances in America. His maiden speech afforded such a display of eloquence as excited the admiration of the house, and drew very high praise from its most distinguished member, Mr. Pitt.

The principal object which engaged the attention of the Rockingham Administration was America. The sentiments of opposite parties rendered their situation extremely delicate and difficult. On the one hand, the Grenville party, the devisers of taxation, and the framers of the stamp-act, insisted on coercive measures: on the other, Mr. Pitt and his adherents, on a disavowal of the right of taxing America. Lord Rockingham consulted with Burke, whose advice was, "to chuse a middle course between the opposite extremes: neither to precipitate affairs with the colonists, by rash counsels; nor to sacrifice the dignity of the crown and nation, by irresolution or weakness." A plan was formed consonant to this opinion. To gratify the Americans, the stamp-act was repealed: to vindicate the honour of Britain, a law was passed declaring her right to legislate for America in taxation and every other case; and censuring the violence of the colonial opposition.

An attempt to satisfy two parties of totally contrary views, by not deciding the point at issue, is rarely either the offspring of wisdom, or the parent of success. Such temporizing indecision generally dissatisfies both parties, and keeps the differences alive. The stamp act had been opposed in America, not as inexpedient, but as unjust. They had not pretended they could not pay the impost, but that the imposers had no right to tax. Either the stamp act was a grievance, or was not: if a grievance, the redress did not apply to the subject of complaint; if not a grievance, why offer redress? If the objections of the colonies were groundless, it would have been just in Parliament to disregard them; and wise or unwise, according to the value of the object, means of coercion, and probable result. If the right was ascertained, and we thought coercion prudent, the repeal would be absurd; if not, the declaration of right would be a mere impotent bravado. If the complaints of America were well grounded, then it would have been just and wise to renounce the exercise of an unjust power. Here was the maintenance of an obnoxious speculative principle, with the abandonment of practical benefit, for which only it could deserve support. The declaratory law tended to counteract, in America, the effect of the repeal. The measures of the Rockingham Administration

were esteemed the result of good intentions, but of feeble and short-sighted policy.

These measures, recommended and supported by Burke, I cannot, consistently with impartiality, praise, as manifestations of either great political wisdom or vigour. His plan, at this his outset, was founded more upon metaphysical distinctions and barren generalities, than afterwards, when his great powers were, by experience, matured in the contemplation of affairs. I must confess, I think that *his sequestered exertions*, as a man of genius, literature, and philosophy, could have produced much greater benefit to society, in the same period, than his political efforts during the Rockingham Administration.

The repeal of the stamp-act, and the declaratory law, were proposed and passed.

The Rockingham Ministry, though supported by the extraordinary genius and acquirements of Burke, were deficient in political experience and vigour; qualities much more efficacious in the conduct of affairs, than, without them, the highest intellectual superiority. It must, however, be allowed, that they proposed several good laws. These Burke supported with all the powers of his eloquence. The cider-act was repealed: so that the jurisdiction of the excise was contracted. Resolutions were passed against general warrants, and the seizure of papers. Several regulations were made, favourable to

commerce. Still, however, the Ministers were deemed unqualified for conducting the business of Government. Their dismissal from office was accelerated by the Chancellor Northington. They were endeavouring to form a constitution for the recently conquered province of Canada. Burke sketched a plan for this purpose. Being shewn to the Chancellor, he condemned it in the most explicit terms. Going to the King, he represented the Ministers as totally inexperienced in business, and unfit for office. His Majesty commissioned Northington to consult Mr. Pitt on the formation of another ministry. To that illustrious man the appointment was principally left. Mr. Pitt would not admit any advice from his former friends and associates, or share in the arrangements of the cabinet; but combined them according to the dictates of his own will. Lord Temple, in particular, charged him with having acted the part of an imperious dictator, and refused the office of First Lord of the Treasury. The Administration which Pitt constituted, was made up of most heterogeneous materials. From its members, he was said, by his opponents, to expect and require very implicit submission to his mandates. He himself, now created Lord Chatham, took the Privy Seal. The Duke of Grafton was made First Lord of the Treasury, and Charles Townshend Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Burke wrote a defence of the Rockingham

Administration, in a plain, simple style, without any of his usual digressive, though beautiful embellishments. His object is to appear a fair, candid witness, when he is really a dexterous advocate. In a *seeming narration* of the several measures, he embodies inferences most favourable to his friends. Speaking of the principal acts, he says:—

“ In that space of time, the distractions of the British empire were composed, by *the repeal of the American stamp-act*; but the constitutional superiority of Great Britain was preserved, by *the act for securing the dependence of the colonies*.

“ Private houses were *relieved from the jurisdiction of the excise, by the repeal of the cider-tax*.

“ The personal liberty of the subject was confirmed, by *the resolution against general warrants*.

“ The lawful secrets of business and friendship were rendered inviolable, by *the resolution for condemning the seizure of papers*.”

He proceeds to their other acts. Here we may observe, that he merely takes for granted the two leading points in dispute with the Grenville party, on the one hand, and the Chatham, on the other. Burke, in this defence, resembled a merchant, who, professing to give a fair, impartial statement of contested accounts, should take credit to himself for the principal items in dispute. He very prudently satisfies

himself, as to the two main articles, with mere concise assertion, and reserves illustration and enlargement for less questionable measures: His defence, if not an impartial discussion of political proceedings, is a very artful, plausible, party memorial.

He soon after made an ironical reply to this serious defence. This is in the form of a letter, signed with the celebrated name of Whittington; the author professing to be a tallow-chandler, and common-council-man, in Cat-eaton-street, and, like his name-sake, to think himself destined to be Lord Mayor before he died. The letter is addressed to the Public Advertiser. I shall make extracts, for the perusal of such of my readers, as either have not read, or have forgotten the Epistle of Whittington.

“ *In the multitude of counsellors there is safety.* If SOLOMON means privy-counsellors, this nation ought to be safe beyond all others, since none can boast such a variety of ministers, and none can such a multitude of privy-counsellors.

“ Ministers, now-a-days, are pricked down for the year, like sheriffs; and if none were to make more of their offices than the last did, I fancy we should see them *fine off*. Now you can no more guess who is in office to-day, by the court-kalendar of last year, than you can

tell the present price of stocks by LLOYD'S *List of Christmas 1745*.

“ But the main design of my taking pen in hand, was to refute the silly author of a late silly publication, called *A short Account of a late short Administration*.

“ This half-sheet accomptant shows his ill-humour in the very title ; he calls one year and twenty days a *short Administration* ; whereas I can prove, by the *Rule of Three Direct*, that it is as much as any Ministry in these times has a right to expect.

“ Since the happy accession of his present Majesty, to this day, we have worn out no less than five complete sets of honest, able, upright Ministers, not to speak of the present, whom whom G—d long preserve !

“ First, we had Mr. PITT'S Administration ; next, the Duke of NEWCASTLE'S ; then, Lord BUTE'S ; then, Mr. GRENVILLE'S ; and, lastly, my Lord ROCKINGHAM'S.

“ Now, Sir, if you take a bit of chalk, and reckon from the seventh of October, 1760, to the thirtieth of July, 1766, you will find five years, nine months, and thirty days ! which, divided by five, the total of Administrations gives exactly one year and sixty days each, *on an average*, as we say in the city, and one day more, if they have the good fortune to serve in leap year.”

The letter proceeds to a very humorous and severe attack of Lord Chatham, and the Minis-

try which he had formed. It had very great influence in lessening the popularity of that statesman and his supporters.

Sir John Hawkins expressed to Johnson his wonder that Burke procured a seat. Sir John was not a man fitted to see extraordinary powers and acquirements previous to their production of fame and admiration. He knew Burke to be a man of very uncommon talents, when all the world joined in that opinion: Johnson, who had, from the first meeting, penetrated into his intellectual character, answered, that Burke would soon be known to be the first man in the house, as he would be in any society.

He was now well known in the fashionable world, and as much liked for the pleasingness of his address and conversation, as admired for his genius and acquirements. He became the intimate friend of Sir Joshua Reynolds, whose house was the receptacle of genius, learning, taste, and politeness. Mrs. Montague courted his acquaintance. She was herself literary, and had written an essay on Shakespeare, to which Johnson, according to his biographer, did not do justice. He condemned it as deficient in general philosophical criticism; when it was intended for a special object, merely to vindicate Shakespeare from the misrepresentation of Voltaire, by shewing that his observations, however witty, were not justified by the writings of our dramatic bard. It is rather a narrative of

facts, and refutation of false assertions, than an investigation of principles ; and was useful in undeceiving those readers who judged from what Voltaire said of Shakespeare, instead of judging from Shakespeare himself. There are gradations in criticism, as in other branches of literature, from the verbal annotations of a grammarian to the investigation of a philosopher. Many are the useful and agreeable performances, which are far short of Burke's Sublime, Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics, Johnson's Preface to Shakespeare and Lives of the Poets. Mrs. Montague's essay has, besides, the merit of being clearly and elegantly expressed ; and shews that its fair author had devoted much of her attention to literature and composition. Sir Joshua Reynolds, and many other men of taste and letters, highly esteemed Mrs. Montague, and even Burke thought favourably of her literary talents. Mrs. Montague and several other ladies, about this time, had evening assemblies, in which, instead of cards, they participated in the conversation of literary and ingenious men. One of the most eminent members, when the societies commenced, was Mr. Stillingfleet, who always wore blue stockings. As his conversation was very entertaining, they, when he was absent, used to say, we can do nothing without *the blue stockings* ; and by degrees the assemblies were called *blue stocking clubs*. From that time those ladies, who are, or *pretend to be*, learned, or are

in the fashionable circles supposed to be learned, are called blue stockings.

Burke frequently mingled in these societies, and was a great favourite, as his pleasing, unassuming manners, and apparent deference, made them suppose that he thought them as great scholars as they thought themselves. Johnson also frequently attended, was generally not impolite, and seldom shocked them by flat contradictions, or by exposing flimsy arguments. In Scotland, about the same time, many ladies had a similar pruriency to the conversation of literary men; but there, abstract divinity has the most attractive charms of all species of knowledge. A lady, with this propensity, was one day in company with Mr. Adam Ferguson, a Perthshire clergyman, of great strength of understanding and eminence in the church. The lady, addressing herself to him, said, "Mr. Ferguson, I have dipt into predestinarian controversy." Mr. Ferguson replied, "I must praise your prudence, Madam, in having only *dipt* into it, and recommend that mode in your other theological studies."

Burke also became intimate with the highest society in the political circles; besides the Marquis of Rockingham, with the Duke of Portland, Mr. Dunning, Sir George Saville, and many others. He was ever ambitious to connect himself with men of high rank, though from such he could derive no lustre. He retained his seat in the club, which had now in

creased its numbers. The conversation of Burke there, as every where else, shewed a man much superior to ordinary scholars, whilst his engaging manners prevented his intellectual superiority from being offensive. He exemplified the perfect compatibility of the wisdom of a philosopher with the urbanity and elegance of a polished gentleman. He was no enemy to that enlivener of social parties; wine. One evening he observed that a hogshead of Claret, which had been sent them as a present, was almost out, and proposed that Johnson should write for another, in such ambiguity of expression, as might have a chance of procuring it also as a gift. One of the company said Dr. Johnson shall be our dictator. "Were I (said Johnson) your dictator, you should have no wine; it would be my business *cavere nequid detrimentis publicis caperet*:—wine is dangerous; Rome was ruined by luxury." Burke replied, "If you allow no wine as dictator, you shall not have me for master of the horse." Johnson, although he attributed every high species of intellectual excellence to Burke, would not allow that he possessed wit. From his speeches and writings, I trust I shall be able to shew many instances of wit, according to Johnson's definition of that term, which agrees with its received acceptation: "A combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike." At the same time, although it may appear from

Burke's works, that he abounded in wit much more than ordinary writers and speakers, yet the proportion of that quality in his mind to his other qualities, was less than in many inferior minds. He was endued with a quick and delicate perception of humour and ridicule, and could paint with the happiest effect. His humour was versatile, either playful or sarcastical, poignant or strong, as best suited his purpose. He most frequently cut with a razor; but could fell with a hatchet; and not rarely united the keenness of the one with the force of the other.

That portion of his *reply*, which I have lately quoted, is a very sarcastic picture of the unsettled state of the executive government, and the fluctuation of counsels during the first part of the present reign. The following passage, from the same letter, concerning Lord Chatham and his new Ministry, is also very humorous: "He has, once more, deigned to take the reins of government in his own hand, and will, no doubt, drive with his wonted speed, and raise a deal of dust around him. His horses are all matched to his mind; but as some of them are young and skittish, it is said he has adopted the new contrivance lately exhibited by Sir FRANCIS DELAVAL on Westminster Bridge; whenever they begin to snort and toss up their heads, he touches the spring, throws them loose, and away they go, leaving his Lordship safe

and snug, and as much at ease, as if he sat on a wool-pack."

Although a friend to an aristocracy of property, talents, and virtue, he was not a very profound admirer of the nobility, not conceiving them eminent for the two last. Speaking one day on the debauchery of high life and its consequences: "It is no wonder (he said) the issue of the marriage-bed should be puny and degenerate, when children are formed out of the rinsing of bottles."

The influence of Lord Chatham, even with the Ministry of his own choice, was of no long continuance. A want of union among Ministry was apparent during the succeeding session. It was a great, an irreparable misfortune to the country, that there was not a good understanding between the Earl of Chatham and the Rockingham party; between the favourite of the people and the Whig aristocracy, between the personal authority and the combined powers of the friends of freedom. Lord Chatham soon perceived that there was an influence behind the throne which counteracted his exertions. He made overtures to a coalition with the Rockingham party; which might have been effectual sooner, but were then too late. Lord Rockingham conceiving Lord Chatham to have been instrumental in the dismissal of him and his friends, (a dismissal really arising from their own precipitate acceptance of office without sufficient force to controul the cabal) re-

refused to have any intercourse with him. Private
 resentment appears here to have predominated
 over public spirit, most unfortunately for the
 nation. Talents, property, and patriotism, if
 conjoined, might have overturned favouritism ;
 especially as the system of favouritism had then
 neither a large proportion of splendid *talents* for
 its *supporters*, nor of GREAT PROPRIETORS for its
 DUPES. Burke, however, and the other friends
 of the Marquis, in the early part of the succeed-
 ing Administration, were not very violent in
 their opposition. Lord Chatham was thwarted
 chiefly by the interior cabinet. Measures be-
 lieved to originate from favouritism were pro-
 posed by Mr. Charles Townshend, which blew
 the discontents of America into a violent flame.
 Instead of the mode of internal taxation pro-
 posed by the stamp act, and afterwards dis-
 continued by its repeal, an external was adopted :
 —a tax was laid on various articles of the import
 trade of America. The principle of this new
 act was reprobated through the colonies. It
 was represented as a branch of the same plan
 of taxing America without its own consent.
 Its operation was violently opposed, and even
 successfully obstructed. The officers appoint-
 ed to collect the new imposts were beaten and
 abused. In parliament, the succeeding session,
 the party of which Burke was a member, on
 the address in answer to his Majesty's speech,
 reprobated the measures of Administration re-

specting the colonies. Burke made an oration on the subject; the tenor of which was to prove that the late resolutions were ill-timed and inexpedient, and the means employed for their execution unwise and ineffectual. In this speech he took occasion to direct his eloquence against the secret influence of which he alleged Ministry to be the tools. Of the interior cabinet, a main object, he said, was to separate friend from friend, party from party, that *public men* might the more easily be rendered *subservient* to the CABAL. This speech contained many of the heads of the subsequent essay on "the Causes of the Discontents."

Lord Chatham, finding that Ministry were proceeding in a plan totally opposite to his opinion, and under a direction which he deemed ruinous to the country, having, in spite of age and ill health, made every effort that patriotism could prompt, to give things a contrary bias, and finding his exertions vain, resigned in disgust. The magnanimous, patriotic mind of the great Pitt would not descend to receive the mandates of court favourites; to truckle to men whom he despised. This was an independence of mind not always the concomitant even of conscious genius.

At the close of this session parliament was dissolved. Burke, who had been only two years a member, was already considered as the first orator in the house, at a time when there was

in it a very splendid assemblage of talents. His orations at first were more tinctured with the metaphysical learning which had occupied a great part of his early life, than is to be perceived in the speeches of more mature, moral and political experience. His was the eloquence of a very great mind, accustomed to generalization ; but became afterwards more marked by practical wisdom.

Burke was re-elected for Wendover. The new parliament met in November, 1768.

An act passed during this session which excited great disturbances in and out of parliament. This was the famous expulsion of Wilkes, and the consequent proceedings.

Wilkes, when the Ministers who had persecuted him were dismissed from office, and the Marquis of Rockingham was appointed, had returned to London. The Marquis and his friends, whatever might be their opinion of his private character, had strongly expressed their disapprobation of his unjust treatment. From them Wilkes hoped for compassion for his sufferings, and redress for the injuries which he had received. To fortify his cause by private influence, he prevailed on Mr. Maclean, an intimate friend of Burke, to second him in applying to that gentleman. Burke acquainted him, from the Marquis, that he was disposed to serve him, but would not pledge himself to any specific mode. Wilkes conceived that, as the

Minister courted popularity, he, having been so strenuous in a popular cause, might command his own terms. He accordingly demanded a general pardon, five thousand pounds in cash, and a pension on the Irish establishment. Burke refused to carry so presumptuous a requisition to his patron; nor would any other person make so extravagant an application.

Disappointed by his own confident folly, and not being able to procure the reversal of his outlawry, Wilkes was obliged to return to exile. When the Duke of Grafton became Prime Minister, he wrote him to the following purport: * “ He congratulated the country on the promotion of his Grace, and intreated him to mediate his pardon from the King; declaring, that he had never, in any moment of his life, swerved from the duty and allegiance he owed to his Sovereign, and professing in every thing to submit to his Majesty’s clemency. Your Grace’s noble manner of thinking (says he), and the obligations I have formerly received, which are still fresh in my mind, will, I hope, give a full propriety to this address; and I am sure, a heart glowing with the sacred zeal of liberty must have a favourable reception from the Duke of Grafton.”

This application was neglected. Mr. Wilkes’s

* Belsham’s Memoirs of George III. vol. i. p. 233.

hope of pardon being extinguished, he resolved to make his enemies feel his resentment. At the present crisis, the conduct of the Court appeared wholly unaccountable. There was plainly no just medium between the opposite determinations of rigour and lenity. If the former were adopted, by putting into immediate execution the sentence of outlawry, his projects of revenge and ambition would have been easily and completely defeated. If, on the contrary, the wiser and more generous plan of lenity were preferred, a full and free pardon ought to have been granted: with his persecution, his influence and popularity would have ceased. To halt between the two opinions was an infallible proof of weakness in the cabinet counsels.

On the dissolution of parliament Wilkes came from Paris to London, to offer himself a candidate for the city. He was received with rapturous applause by the people; but rejected on the poll, through Harley, the Lord Mayor, a strenuous supporter of the Court. The magistrate was grossly insulted by the populace. Wilkes immediately offered for Middlesex. Supported not only by the lower people, but by men of the first opulence in the city, and men of the first talents at the bar and in the senate, he was returned by a very great majority. Soon after he surrendered himself to the jurisdiction of the King's Bench.

A sentence was passed condemning him to imprisonment for two years ; to pay a fine of a thousand pounds, and to find security for his good behaviour for seven years. The people, enraged at this sentence, which an arbitrary alteration of records made still more hateful, forcibly rescued him from the officers who were taking him to prison, and made a triumphant procession with him through the city. As soon as the multitude dispersed he surrendered himself to the Marshal of the Bench. The day of the first meeting of the new parliament, numbers assembled in St. George's Fields, expecting to see Wilkes go from the place of his confinement to the House of Commons. As they became very riotous, the Surrey magistrates were obliged to interfere, and at last to call the military. The mob abused and attacked the soldiers ; they being ordered to fire, unfortunately killed an innocent man. Government expressed the highest approbation of the justices and the troops, in a letter from Lord Weymouth, Secretary of State, to the Surrey Magistrates. A copy of this letter was procured by Wilkes, who published it, with a very severe and violent prefatory attack. Parliament, meeting, voted this preface an insolent, scandalous, and seditious libel. Wilkes, avowing himself the author, was expelled the house. On a new election he was again unanimously chosen. The house then

declared, that Mr. Wilkes, being expelled, was incapable of sitting in the same parliament; and that, therefore, the election was void. He was chosen a third time, and the third election declared void. At the fourth Col. Luttrell stood candidate. For Wilkes there were twelve hundred and forty-three, for Luttrell two hundred and ninety-six. Wilkes was returned, but his name was erased from the writ by order of the house, and Luttrell's substituted in its place. Some of our readers may have forgotten the series of proceedings concerning this noted demagogue. Besides their general importance in the questions they involved, and the very great political and literary exertions on both sides which they excited, they have a special importance to a biographer of Burke. They more fully unfolded the powers of his eloquence in the house than had been hitherto done; and from the closet they called forward the most able, comprehensive, and profound account of the political state of the country. I have, therefore, thought this summary concerning Wilkes not irrelative to the subject of my work.

Opposition consisted of two parties of very different views and principles, though agreed in their disapprobation of the Grafton Ministry: —the party of which Lord Rockingham was the nominal leader, and Burke the most distinguished orator; and that of which Mr. Grenville was the head.

The author of the *Memoirs of Mr. Burke* draws the following character of Grenville's and of Burke's eloquence. "Mr. Burke's eloquence was splendid, copious, and animated; sometimes addressing itself to the passions, much oftener to the fancy; but *very seldom to the understanding*. It seemed fitter for shew than debate; for the school than the senate; and was calculated rather to excite applause than to produce conviction. Mr. Grenville's was plain, yet correct; manly, argumentative, trusting more to genuine candour, to the energy of reason, and the well displayed evidence of truth, than to the rainbow colours of fine imagery, or the blaze of artificial declamation. Mr. Burke, naturally ardent and impetuous, took fire at the smallest collision; and the sudden bursts of his anger, or his vehemence, when all around him was calm, could only be compared to the rant of intoxication in the presence of a sober and dispassionate company: Mr. Grenville, even when attacked with the utmost asperity, shewed a perfect command of temper."

Coinciding in some parts of this opinion, I by no means accede to all. I am far from thinking that Burke addresses himself *very seldom to the understanding*. To me his speeches appear to have, besides their imagery, a greater abundance and variety of knowledge, more forcible reasoning and more enlarged philosophy, than those of Mr. Grenville, or almost

any orator of any age or country. So far from seldom addressing the understanding, I think he commonly directed to it more of argument, and of general principle, than the mere subject required ; or, perhaps, some of the audience could comprehend. His presents to intellect, so far from being scanty, are too often profuse, and more valuable than necessary for the purpose : where a moderate sum of silver would suffice, he lavishes heaps of gold. For parliamentary business, however, I agree with the author, in thinking the clear, sound understanding, senatorial experience, and steady temper of Grenville, fitter than the brilliant fancy, philosophical expansion, and impetuous passions of Burke. Such a mind, and such habits, as Grenville's, rendered him as much fitter for being the leader of a party, a prime minister, a conductor of affairs, as the mind and habits of Burke rendered him for being a poet, an historian, a philosopher.

About this time two pamphlets appeared ; the first intituled *The present State of the Nation*, written either by Grenville, or under his direction ; the second, intituled *Observations on the present State of the Nation*, by Burke. Grenville's pamphlet goes over the war, the peace, the finances, trade, foreign politics, and the constitution, with a view to shew the country

to be in a very bad state, and its situation to be owing to a deviation from the plan of politics, especially of finance, adopted by the Grenville Ministry.

Mr. Grenville goes through a vast variety of detail, on our trade, revenue, colonies, and public funds. He accompanies his account with very long, minute, and intricate calculations. He endeavours to shew, that we are in a much inferior situation to France, whose state he details with equal minuteness, and equally confident assertion of exactness. America was, he attempts to prove, in so flourishing a condition, as to be able; with great ease, to supply the deficiency of Britain. To this great source of finance he subjoins several smaller, from Ireland, India, and other settlements. By an adoption only of the Grenville plans in general, and respecting America in particular, was this country to be saved.

Burke; considering *the State of the Nation* as in itself erroneous, calculated to diffuse unfounded alarms, and as implying censure on the Marquis of Rockingham, answered it in what he intituled *his Observations*. He shewed, that when a man of genius encounters a man of detail in the fields of literature, he can, with great ease, drive him from his own ground. The man of genius can; without any great effort of industry, master the details which constitute the strong-holds of his adversary. Burke

here demonstrates the vast extent and particularity of his commercial and political knowledge. He follows Grenville over the wide ground he had taken ; proves him to be wrong in his alledged facts and calculations, and consequently in his inferences. He enters into a detail of our manufactures and trade,—internal, with our own colonies and settlements, and with foreign countries ; describes its actual state, and the various circumstances which may affect it in future. He takes a review of our revenue and public funds. He next proceeds to the resources, debt, and expenditure of France, and by an accurate statement of facts, and the clearest calculations, shews Grenville's assertion respecting the superiority of our rival to be unfounded. He denies an increase of revenue to be practicable from Ireland. Respecting both Ireland and America, he proves the absurdity of expecting a revenue from a detached and distant part of the empire, merely because he supposes it able to bear taxation. Here he gives the outlines of Mr. Grenville's financial character. “ It is (says he) the constant custom of this author, in all his writings, to take it for granted, that he has given you a revenue, whenever he can point out to you where you may have money, if you can contrive how to get at it; and this seems to be the master-piece of his financial ability.” Mr. Grenville had proposed two hundred thousand

year to be levied from the Americans. "He is (says he) satisfied to repeat gravely, as he has done a hundred times before, *that the Americans are able to pay it*. Well, and what then? Does he lay open any part of his plan how they may be compelled to pay it, without plunging ourselves into calamities that outweigh ten-fold the proposed benefit? or does he shew how they may be induced to submit to it quietly? or does he give any satisfaction concerning the mode of levying it?" He ridicules and exposes the folly of expecting any other revenue from our settlements in India, than what results from duties on the trade from that country, and from the lease of the monopoly according to the charter. More advanced in political wisdom than when he advised a law declaratory of a right, without any practical benefit, he leaves barren generalities for expediency. "To talk (says he) of the rights of sovereignty is quite idle; different establishments supply different modes of public contribution. Our trading *companies*, as well as individual importers, are a fit subject of revenue by customs. Some establishments pay us by a *monopoly* of their consumption and their produce. This, nominally no tax, in reality comprehends all taxes. Such establishments are our colonies. To tax them, would be as erroneous in policy as rigorous in equity. Ireland supplies us by furnishing troops in war, and by bearing part

of our foreign establishment in peace. She aids us at all times by the money that her absentees spend amongst us ; which is no small part of the rental of that kingdom. Thus Ireland contributes her part. Some objects bear port duties ; some are fitter for an inland excise. The mode varies ; the object is the same. To strain these from their old and inveterate leanings, might impair the old benefit, and not answer the end of the new project. Among all the great men of antiquity, *Procrustes* shall never be my hero of legislation ; with his iron bed, the allegory of his government, and the type of some modern policy, by which the long limb was to be cut short ; and the short tortured into length. Such was the state-bed of uniformity ! He would, I conceive, be a very indifferent farmer, who complained that his sheep did not plough, or his horses yield him wool ; though it would be an idea full of equality. They may think this right in rustic economy, who think it available in the politic ;

*Qui Bævium non odit, amet tua carmina Mævi !
Atque idem jungat vulpes, et mulgeat hircos."*

He proceeds to an attack upon the Grenville Administration, which, though somewhat exaggerated, is in many respects just ; vindicates the Rockingham Ministry, not without evident partiality ; makes a very high panegyric on his patron, and the connections of

the party ; and animadvert, with cutting severity, on their successors in office.

There is one excellence which I shall have occasion frequently to remark in the writings and speeches of Burke. They abound in the wisest general observations, descriptions of mankind, and lessons of conduct. This essay contains a very striking picture of political profligacy, in its progress and consequences. “ There is something (he says) uncertain on the confines of the two empires which they first pass through, and which renders the change easy and imperceptible. There are even a sort of splendid impositions, so well contrived, that, at the very time the path of rectitude is quitted for ever, men seem advancing into some nobler road of public conduct. Not that such impositions are strong enough *in themselves*, but a POWERFUL INTEREST, often concealed from those whom it affects, works at the bottom, and secures the operation. Men are thus debauched away from their legitimate connections—gradually they are habituated to other company. Certain persons are no longer frightful when they come to be serviceable. As to their OLD FRIENDS, the transition is easy—from friendship to civility ; from civility to enmity : *few are the steps from dereliction to persecution.*”

The nomination of Luttrell involved in it a totally different question from the expulsion of Wilkes. The expulsion was a question of

individual conduct ; the nomination of constitutional right—whether, by the laws of the land, expulsion constituted disqualification. Burke made a most masterly speech on this subject, contending, and indeed proving, that there was neither statute nor applicable precedent resting the incapacitation of persons to be members of parliament in any thing but an act of the legislature. The substance of this speech is published only in the Parliamentary Debates. In the state in which they give it, it displays a most extensive and accurate acquaintance with parliamentary history and cases, and the soundest notions of political expediency.

This session American affairs afforded Burke a subject for the exhibition of his eloquence and wisdom. It was proposed by Ministry to revive the statute of Henry VIII. by which the King is empowered to appoint a commission in England for the trial of treason committed beyond seas. Against this proposed revival Burke directed the force of his powers. The plan of bringing delinquents from the province of Massachusetts to England, to be tried, was, he contended, in its principle inconsistent with the law of England. In this country, a man charged with a crime is tried near the place where it is alledged to have been committed ; that, if innocent, he may have the means of acquittal. It was iniquitous in its operation. By taking the accused to an immense distance from his

friends and business, it rendered it impossible, unless to men of great opulence, to endure the expence of bringing the evidence necessary to vindication. The judges, who were to be of the mother country, would be persons against whom the accused was supposed to have transgressed; the prosecution, in effect, would be condemnation, and so the great purposes of justice entirely defeated. Even if the mode proposed were just, it would be attended with such difficulty of execution as would, in every prudential view, amount to impracticability. The attempt would irritate the colonies, whilst its inefficacy would not restrain dangerous practices. Unfortunately, experience confirmed the anticipation of sagacity,—the proposal exasperated the Americans, the plan afforded no obstruction to their disorders.

Whilst those measures of the House of Commons, respecting the colonies, which Burke opposed, were causing disturbances in America, the proceedings respecting Wilkes were exciting discontents at home. They were considered as a gross violation of the rights of election. An alarm for the constitution was spread; an alarm much beyond its cause; since, admitting one unconstitutional assumption of power to have taken place, it did not follow, from a particular fact, that a general system was endangered.

Dr. Johnson's "False Alarm" endeavours

to prove that the power of disqualification of expelled members was necessary to the House of Commons, as expulsion, with re-eligibility, would be a nominal not a real punishment. But the question was not what power it might be expedient that the House of Commons should possess, but what powers from statute or custom it actually did possess. To his arguments on expediency it might be replied, the house could have repeatedly expelled Wilkes if they thought him still to deserve expulsion.—If they could prove it to be expedient that expulsion should constitute disqualification, let a bill to that effect be moved; and if approved of by the other branches of the legislature, passed into a law. Dr. Johnson, aware that expediency alone would not support his position, attempts to adduce precedents, but fails in their application. It is to be observed here, that Burke, and many others, who opposed the return of Colonel Luttrell, strongly disapproved of many parts of Mr. Wilkes's conduct as morally profligate and politically seditious.

The proceedings of the Grafton Administration respecting Wilkes, and other subjects, gave rise to the celebrated *Letters of Junius*. These compositions, in clearness, neatness, precision of style, in such arrangement and expression as give the materials fully the desired effect, have few equals among political publications. Unclaimed by any, they have been ascribed

to several authors, among others to Burke. Most of the writers against Junius, in the periodical publications of the times, address him as an Irishman ; and at the same time endeavour to reproach Burke for being of that nation. One of them, Antimalagrida, in abusing the Marquis of Rockingham, makes one article of his invective, that he was guided by an Irish Secretary. Some of Burke's friends supposed him the author, as the only man equal to the performance. On that ground Johnson, according to Boswell, once thought him the writer ; but on his spontaneously declaring the contrary, was convinced by his assertion. " I should (he said) have believed Burke to be Junius, because I know no man but Burke who is capable of writing these letters ; but Burke spontaneously denied it to me : the case would have been different had I asked him if he was the author, a man may think he has a right to deny it, when so questioned as to an anonymous publication." Even spontaneous disavowal of a performance, by many imputed to him, and of which the supposition of his being the writer might have exposed him to prosecution, is not a disproof. As there is no *testimony* to prove, either who was the writer, or that Burke was not, our opinion must be formed from probability. *Those who impute the Letters of Junius to Burke* may probably reason in some such manner as the follow-

ing:—They are evidently the production of very considerable talents. There were very few writers of the times equal to the task. They must have been written by a person inimical to the Grafton Administration, and to the secret influence by which it was believed to be now guided. In the general opinion, and in the particular circumstances of Burke, we can find probable motives which might have induced him to commence and continue the attack. The Duke of Grafton had been brought into administration by the Rockingham party, and was represented as having betrayed that nobleman and his friends: either, on that account, or because he succeeded to the Ministry, he was very obnoxious to the friends of the Marquis. Hence it was natural to impute a severe attack on him to one of that party, in which the pre-eminence of genius unquestionably belonged to Burke. He, in the house, poured forth his eloquence in attacks upon the Grafton Administration in general, and more particularly on those of its acts which are the principal butts of Junius's invective. Burke strenuously maintained the existence of a system of court-favouritism, and joined in ascribing to its influence the dismissal of his friends. He reprobated the measures which he supposed to originate from that source, and the principal agents of the junto. Hence it was very probable that the Duke of Bedford, the negociator of Lord Bute's peace and

the opposer of the Rockingham interest, should excite the displeasure of Burke. The Whig party considered the doctrines advanced by the Lord Chief Justice on the bench as inconsistent with constitutional liberty, and as a branch of the same Tory or rather Jacobite origin. Burke, in the House of Commons, frequently displayed his eloquence against the doctrines and practices of Lord Mansfield. He particularly execrated the proceedings respecting the Middlesex election. In all these circumstances he coincided with Junius. In considering the intellect of Junius, it was very easy to see that not many of that, or of any other party were equal to the letters. In all there is closeness and pungency, but in some there is richness of classical allusion, and fertility of imagery. The imagery, besides, frequently resembles that for which Burke's writings are so eminently distinguished. In one of his letters to the Duke of Grafton, Junius borrows metaphors from a source very usual with the orator. "Lord Bute's views and situation required a creature void of all these properties; (abilities, judgment, and integrity) and he was forced to go through every division, resolution, composition, and refinement of political chemistry, before he happily arrived at the *caput mortuum* of vitriol in your Grace. Flat and insipid in your retired state, but brought into action, you became vitriol again." Afterwards, "but you have discovered your pur-

poses too soon ; and instead of the modest reserve of virtue, have shewn us the ternagant chastity of a prude, who gratifies her passions with distinction, and prosecutes one lover for a rape, whilst she solicits the rude embraces of another." The rapidity of Burke's genius often hurries him into a mixture of figures. This too is frequently the case with Junius : thus in a letter to the Duke of Grafton, " with what countenance can you take your seat at the Treasury Board, or in Council, when you feel that every *circulating* WHISPER is at your expence alone, and STABS you to the heart !"

From both the reasoning and style of some of Junius's letters, many think there are grounds for believing Burke to be the author.

Those, on the other hand, *who conceive him not to have been Junius*, may probably reason in the following manner :—On considering the intellectual qualities of Burke and of Junius, it would appear that there is so great a dissimilarity between the one and the other, as to justify us in disbelieving Burke to be the writer. As to the intellectual character of Junius, although we must allow it very considerable excellence, we may easily perceive that it is of a different kind and inferior degree to Edmund Burke. In Junius we have more of perspicacity than of expansion ; more of pungency than of force. His weapon is the sharp arrow of Teucer, not the massy sword of Achilles. He rapidly pe-

penetrates into particulars, but does not rise to great general views. He is rather an expert lawyer, speaking closely to his own side, than a philosophical politician, embracing the interests of kingdoms and of mankind. Whatever Burke has spoken, or avowedly written, goes beyond the mere object of the hour, and makes accuracy of detail and acuteness of reasoning subservient to the establishment or confirmation of some general truth. Junius keeps directly to his subject: the rapidly associating mind of Burke pursues his thoughts through a train of combinations, not always necessary to the specific object, though always pleasing, interesting, or instructing. Junius is thoroughly acquainted with the *road* in which he chuses to steer, but attends little to its bearings, any farther than they are necessary for piloting his bark: Burke surveys the *whole coast*. In Junius there is neatness and justness of allusion: in Burke, richness, beauty, and grandeur of imagery. The style of Junius is clear, correct, and precise, with no great variety: the style of Burke copious, brilliant, forcible, with wonderful variety, appropriate to the diversity of subjects and objects. Either Burke did not write Junius's Letters, or wrote very differently from his general manner; and employed a strict, watchful, and uniform attention for which we can assign no adequate motive in restraining his intellectual

powers from their usual exertions and expatiations.

Besides these general reasons of intellectual character, which contravene the belief that Burke is the author, there are special reasons from his opinions. Burke had been a member of the Rockingham Administration, and was the supporter of that party, its principles and measures: there are passages in Junius which shew the author to be neither. In a letter to the Duke of Bedford, he says, "Apparently united with Mr. Grenville, you waited until Lord Rockingham's Administration should dissolve in its own weakness." These were not the sentiments of Burke respecting the administration of his friend and patron. Again, in a letter to Mr. Horne Tooke, speaking of Lord Chatham: "He has publicly declared himself a convert to triennial parliaments; and though I have long been convinced that this is the only possible resource we have left for preserving the substantial freedom of the constitution, I do not think we have a right to determine against the integrity of Lord Rockingham or his friends. Other measures may undoubtedly be supported by argument, as better adapted to the disorder or more likely to be obtained." Burke, it is well known to every man acquainted with parliamentary history, was uniformly averse to triennial parliaments. One of the letters disapproves of the opposition made to

Mr. Grenville's laws respecting America: Burke always approved of that opposition, and was the constant opponent of American taxation.

Were I to hazard an opinion on the subject, it would be, that Burke was not most frequently the writer of Junius's letters, if he was of any. Though very excellent, they are not equal, nor peculiarly similar, to his productions. They have been imputed to Lord George Germain, but I cannot accede to that opinion. Lord George is close and correct; in those qualities he resembles Junius: he does not abound in point and imagery; and in those qualities does not resemble Junius. I think Lord George Germain not Junius, because inferior to the latter; Burke, because superior.

The letters resemble the pungency and keen satire of Richard Burke more than the wisdom of Edmund. Richard, besides, was a man of a dissipated life, and consequently more likely to be acquainted with the history of ministerial gallantries, which occupy no small portion of Junius's animadversions. In all this, however, there is hitherto no certainty. The time may arrive when the mystery will be unfolded. The discovery of this hidden champion of anti-ministerial politics may be, perhaps, in the power of a very eminent politician, still alive, and the first philological philosopher of the age.

As the ministry were very unpopular, Junius

reigned paramount over all political writings for two years. It has been said that the very forcible attack of Junius by Johnson in his "Falkland Island," so completely overthrew the popular champion, that he never resumed the fight. Though inferior to Johnson, it is not likely Junius would have been frightened from the field, even by that formidable opponent; especially as he fought under a mask, and could watch his own time and opportunity. In fact, Junius wrote for a year after the publication of "Falkland Island." That pamphlet was brought out in spring 1771, and immediately attracted the notice of all parties; and Junius did not discontinue his warfare till spring 1772, and some of the boldest of his letters to Lord Mansfield and the Duke of Grafton were written towards the close of 1771. It is more probable, that as the principal object of his attacks (the Duke of Grafton) had retired from office, the Duke of Bedford was dead, and all said of the Middlesex election that could be said, Junius gave over his writings when their object no longer existed.

Burke had now gotten a very pleasant villa near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire. Various accounts have been given of his fortune at the time this purchase was made. The most general and best authenticated was, that the Marquis of Rockingham advanced ten thousand pounds on a simple bond, never intended to

he reclaimed : that Dr. Saunders of Spring Gardens advanced five thousand, secured by a mortgage. It is certain that at Dr. Saunders's death, a mortgage on Burke's estate was found by the executor for that sum, and that the principal was considerably increased by arrears of interest. The whole price was twenty-three thousand pounds. It had been said, that Burke, his brother Richard, and Mr. William Burke, were very successful speculators in the funds. Edmund afterwards, as I shall shew, proved that he was totally unconcerned in any such transaction. How the remaining eight thousand pounds were procured I have not been able to ascertain. As one of the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, he drew up a petition concerning the Middlesex election, and praying for a new parliament. The petition was adopted by the county meeting, and presented by him and some other freeholders of note. I shall transcribe the material parts, as it shews, in a few words, both the sentiments of Burke respecting the specific subject, and the comprehensive view he takes of political causes and effects.

“ By the fundamental principles of the constitution, all the electors of Great Britain have an undoubted right to elect, by a majority of legal votes, any man not rendered incapable by the laws of the land. We are thoroughly sensible that the House of

Commons may also judicially determine on the election of members of their own body ; but the law of the land cannot be superseded by any resolution of either house of parliament, no new incapacity can be enacted except by the authority of the legislature. The claim of either house of parliament to make ordinances which should have the force of laws, hath once already proved fatal to the crown and to the constitution, and will, we fear, if the exercise of it be tolerated, prove again destructive to both, (after mentioning the election of Colonel Luttrell). Justly alarmed at an attempt of this formidable nature, duty to our Sovereign, and to our injured country, calls upon us to represent, with all possible respect, the fatal consequences with which this violation of the rights of free election must be attended, and we earnestly implore the intervention of your Majesty's wisdom and goodness to afford, by legal and constitutional methods, the means for removing this unexampled grievance."

This petition, though explicit and firm, is temperate and decorous. The petition from Yorkshire, drawn up by Burke's friend, Sir George Saville, was in a similar style. Some were presented of a very different nature, being in the style of imperious remonstrances and licentious abuse; among the rest, that from the Livery of London, as unlike the one supported by Burke, as the principles of a turbulent DEMOCRAT are to those of a moderate constitutional WHIG.

The political opinions and principles of Burke were about this time published at considerable length, in a pamphlet intituled “Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents.”

Burke’s “Thoughts on the Discontents” deserves the studious perusal of the politician, as it marks with great impartiality the state of the public mind at that period, and its causes, in the condition of the country, and the conduct of the Court. It calls for the peculiar attention of the biographer, as a land-mark of Burke’s own sentiments respecting the British Government, and the means of carrying it into the most successful effect.

The fact, that discontents had existed during a great part of the present reign, and that they had risen to an alarming height, being very obvious, and denied by none, Burke presumes it to be generally admitted: he proceeds, therefore, to the cause. Courtiers ascribed the prevailing dissatisfaction to the seditious wickedness of libellers, and other demagogues; causes which have very frequently produced groundless discontents, but not always. According to the court party, affairs had been managed with consummate wisdom and remarkable moderation; if the character these persons gave of themselves were just, then there certainly could be no foundation for the discontents. The premises, however, Burke does not admit: he con-

tends, that there were strong grounds for dissatisfaction. The various acts of Administration he deduces from a system of making every part of government depend upon a junto of court favourites. “ *To secure (he says) to the Court the unlimited and uncontrouled use of its own vast influence, under the sole direction of its own private favour, has been for some years the great object of policy. If this were compassed, the influence of the Crown must of course produce all the effects which the most sanguine partizans of the Court could possibly desire. Government might then be carried on without any concurrence on the part of the people,—without any attention to the dignity of the greater, or to the affections of the lower sorts.*” To this plan of making every part of government dependent on a junto of court favourites he attributes the various evils of that time. This court junto he calls a *double cabinet*.

Having, in the passage I have quoted, described its object, he proceeds to the means; “ *These were, to draw a line which should separate the Court from the Ministry.*” To render the ostensible Ministers merely the agents of a favourite junto. “ *By this operation, two systems of administration were to be formed; one, which should be in the real secret and confidence; the other, merely ostensible, to perform the official and executory duties of Government,*

The latter were alone to be responsible ; whilst the real advisers, who enjoyed all the power, were effectually removed from all the danger.

“ Secondly, *A party under these leaders was to be formed in favour of the Court against the Ministry.*”

“ Thirdly, Parliament was to be brought to acquiesce in this project. It was to be taught by degrees a total indifference to the persons, rank, influence, abilities, connections, and character of the Minister of the Crown. A cabal of *the closet and back-stairs* was substituted in the place of a national administration.”

He proceeds to the progress, success, and consequences of favouritism, and very eloquently shews its hurtfulness to a free government. “ A PLAN OF FAVOURITISM *for our executory government* is essentially at variance with the plan of our legislature. One great end, undoubtedly, of a mixed government, like ours, is, that the Prince shall not be able to violate the laws. But this, even at first view, is no more than a negative advantage ; an armour merely defensive. It is, therefore, next in order, and equal in importance, *that the discretionary powers which are necessarily vested in the Monarch, whether for the execution of the laws, or for the nomination to magistracy and office, or for conducting the affairs of peace and war, or for ordering the revenue, should all be exercised upon public principles, and*

national grounds, and not on the likings or prejudices, the intrigues or policies, of a Court." He follows the plan and operations of the cabal to the most momentous effect, if we admit it to have actually taken place,—its influence on parliament. "The House of Commons was originally considered as a *CONTROUL*, *issuing immediately from the people*, and *SPEEDILY to be resolved into the mass*, from whence it arose. In this respect, it was in the higher part of government what juries are in the lower. The capacity of a magistrate being transitory, and that of a citizen permanent, the latter capacity, it was hoped, would, of course, preponderate in all discussions, not only between the people and the standing authority of the Crown, but between the people and the *fleeting* authority of the House of Commons itself. It was hoped, that, being of a middle nature between subject and government, they would feel with a more tender and nearer interest, every thing that concerned the people, than the other remoter and more permanent parts of legislature. This character can never be sustained unless the House of Commons shall be made to bear some stamp of the actual disposition of the people at large. It would (among public misfortunes) be an evil more tolerable, that the House of Commons should be *infected with every epidemical phrensy of the people*, as this would indicate some consanguinity, some sympathy of

nature, with their constituents, than that they should, in all cases, be untouched by the opinions and feelings of the people. *The virtue, spirit, and ESSENCE OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS* consists in its being the EXPRESS IMAGE OF THE FEELINGS OF THE NATION. It was not designed to be a controul upon, but for, the people." Having given THIS VERY JUST ACCOUNT of *the intention of a House of Commons*, he proceeds to a description of its state at *that* time, which, whether just or not, is at least very eloquent. "A vigilant and jealous eye over executive and judicial magistracy, an anxious care of public money, an openness, approaching towards facility, to public complaints: these seem to be the true characteristics of an House of Commons. But an addressing House of Commons, and a petitioning nation; an House of Commons full of confidence, when the nation is plunged in despair; in the utmost harmony with ministers, whom the people regard with the utmost abhorrence; who vote thanks, when the public opinion calls upon them for impeachments; who are eager to grant, when the general voice demands account; who, in all disputes between the people and administration, presume against the people; who punish their disorders, but refuse even to enquire into the provocations to them: this is an unnatural, a monstrous state of things in this Constitution. Such an assembly may be a great, wise, awful

senate ; but it is not to any popular purpose an House of Commons." He pursues the secret influence to its effects on foreign affairs, which he maintains also to be pernicious.

His remedy for the evil has not a grain of democracy in its composition. He does not propose an uncontrouled power of the people to prevent an uncontrouled power of the court. His object is to counterpoise the secret oligarchy of favouritism by an open aristocracy of talents, virtue, property, and rank, combined together on avowed principles, agreeable to the constitution, and supported by the approbation and confidence of the people. His plan is, that not popular favour alone shall determine who is to manage government, but popular favour combined with the constituents above mentioned. He thinks that the government should be in the hands of those at the same time most qualified and most interested in the welfare of the whole. These are men of talents, rank, property, and independence. He thinks that an aristocracy so composed will, in all moral probability, promote the good of the country more effectually than either the people themselves, on the one hand, or court minions, on the other. In a word, he proposes that independent property should govern, and not dependent favouritism. The interests of the people, he thinks, should be placed in the hands of the independent yeomen, gentlemen, mer-

chants, and manufacturers of the kingdom, whose situation, from either their fortune or industry, renders them free, independent agents, than in the hands of the mere menials and ministers of court pageantry. He who derives his fortune from inheritance, or successful industry, has an interest in the welfare of the country in which that fortune is vested ; which is not the case with the receivers of court wages. The Sovereign should be determined in the formation of his Ministry by that aristocracy so supported, and not by his own private predilections.

This general principle he applies to a *connection* which, he says, ought to possess Government. One of the chief arguments adduced by Burke in favour of governing the country by a connection, that is, a party of men not dependent on the court, bound together by mutual confidence, common affections, and common interests, is, that it had been governed by such a connection during the most fortunate periods of the preceding reigns since the revolution. Here he brings forward a maxim often applied by him in the succeeding parts of his political life :—that it behoves statesmen to reason from experience and example, and not from abstract principles. The connection by which he proposes the country to be governed is the Whig aristocracy, a combination of those families which had most power :

fully supported the revolution and consequent establishments. Such a combination he supposes to be primarily essential to the well-being of the state. *Generally abhorrent of speculative innovation* in politics, he declares himself inimical to a change, or what its advocates call a reform in the constitution and duration of parliament.

Thus we see Burke has, from his political outset, been a FRIEND TO ARISTOCRATIC GOVERNMENT, AN ENEMY TO PARLIAMENTARY REFORM, AND TO METAPHYSICAL INNOVATION IN POLITICS.

It may be said that, although the country had prospered when government was in the hands of the *Whig connection*, it would not follow, that it was the CONNECTION that produced that prosperity. It may also be said, that the country, in fact, had not prospered to the extent which Burke assumes. It would be difficult to prove that the Duke of Marlborough's victories (had they been as useful as they were brilliant) proceeded from his connection with the Whig party. To many it will be doubtful, whether the proceedings of the Whig connections, after their re-establishment in power by the accession, were not guilty of as oppressive and impolitic acts as any attributed to the court junto, when Burke wrote. Many may think the proceedings against the Tory Lords, by the Whigs, as unjustifiable and unconstitutional as those against the popular favourites at the supposed insti-

gation of the court junto, and conceive the prosecution of Lord Oxford and of Atterbury to have been at least as contrary to natural justice and to constitutional principle, as the prosecution of Wilkes. The purity of the *longest of all Whig Administrations* has been questioned on fully as strong grounds as the purity of any Ministry formed at the instance of the court junto. Corruption appears from history to have prevailed fully as much under the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, as under those of Bute, Grenville, or Grafton. The Whig Ministers, during the first war of George II. did not contribute very much either to national honour or advantage. The most able and successful Minister England had known was not a creature of the Whig aristocracy, but a statesman recommended to his Sovereign's choice by his personal talents and the favour of the people. He was even obnoxious to some Whigs of the highest *rank*, but overbore them by the highest *TALENTS*. Following, therefore, with Burke, experience, as the surest guide in the conduct of affairs, we do not find the Whig combination, which he proposes, most likely to extricate the country from the alledged evil. A Whig junto might be better than a Court junto. Independent Whigs would probably be better disposed to promote the interest of their country, than dependant Courtiers;—*but all Whigs are not independent.* The independence

of many of the members of the *connection* was by **no** means clear. Whig great men had *retainers*, as well as Court great men. Where evil of any great kind, and in a great degree, prevails, the remedy does **not** lie in any particular junto, but in the UNITED SENSE AND VIRTUE OF THE COMMUNITY.

Burke thought the Whig connection more powerful opposers of the court project, than the personal talents and popularity of individuals. His reasoning is directed to recommend the Rockingham party to have the management of affairs, rather than Lord Chatham. Although endued with talents that needed no patronage to render him great, Burke had been brought forward by the Whig interest; and endeavours to shew that the wisest policy was to entrust government to those with whom he himself was connected. He tries to conciliate the King to that party, by intimating, that by it the means of royal magnificence would be much more amply supplied than by the court junto. "Suppose (he says) we were to ask, whether the King has been richer since the establishment of court favouritism, I believe it will be found, that the picture of royal indigence, which our Court has presented, has been truly humiliating. If the royal treasury *had been exhausted by splendour and magnificence, his distress would have been accounted for, and in some measure justified.*"

He contends less for change of measures than change of men. Indeed he proposes no material change of measures.

A much less degree of political knowledge and ability than he possessed would, if impartially exerted, have seen, that such a government as he proposes would be hereafter ineffectual, as it had hitherto been; but so ductile was the fancy, so ardent were the passions of Burke, that he often deviated from reason much farther than men of very inferior talents, with cooler imaginations and tempers. Whatever side he embraced, he embraced eagerly. When his affections were once engaged, whatever they stimulated he frequently conceived to be true and right. It is evidently not peculiar to Burke that his passions often warped his reason; but an attentive observer of his life must see that effect produced in him in so great a degree, as to form a peculiar characteristic of his mind. His genius is often employed in inventing arguments for propositions not true; or devising means for ends not salutary:—in counteracting wisdom.

In many of Burke's writings we meet rather with an abundance of important facts, profound observations, brilliant images, and able arguments, adding to the general amusement, pleasure, information, and instruction, than with *a chain of proofs*, tending to confirm a specific proposition. In this pamphlet, the evident ob-

ject is to evince the necessity of calling Lord Rockingham's party into power. Excellent as it is in many parts, it does not evince the necessity, nor even the expediency, of that change. Some of his premises tend to establish conclusions contrary to those which he forms. While he has drawn a most glowing picture of the corruption of the House of Commons, he is inimical to parliamentary reform. If the House of Commons was so perverted from its original purpose, as to become a mere engine of the Court, a reform would not only be expedient but necessary. A mere dissolution of that parliament would not be sufficient, as the corruption did not arise from causes peculiar to that parliament. If secret influence existed, and existed with the alarming and destructive corruption of the House of Commons, which he states, a *radical* change was necessary. It must be admitted by the friends of Burke, that though he declares himself an enemy to parliamentary reform, his statement of the corruption would, if true, be as strong an argument in favour of reform as its supporters could adduce. Either the disease was not so virulent as he represented, or the remedy which he proposed was inadequate to the cure. *Mere change of physicians* could not expel disorder, without a change of either regimen or medicine. This treatise tends rather to recommend the members of his own college to em-

ployment than to restore the patient to health.

In perusing this, or any of the works of Burke, on the *politics of the time*, the astonishing abilities and knowledge employed lead a reader to regret that they were not directed either to more permanent objects, or to objects, to the attainment of which they might have been more effectual. Though in point of genius and learning even Johnson or Hume were not superior to Burke, the direction of both these men's powers to objects of more permanent importance has rendered their efforts of greater advantage to mankind than Burke's. The effect of exertions so directed as their's depended on their intrinsic ability and skill; the effect of Burke's, in a great degree, on extrinsic circumstances. He might reason, he might write, he might speak, but unless he coincided with the notions and views of government, his reasoning, literature, and oratory, could not effectuate his purposes. There was no subject of moral or political history, or science, of which he was not master. Had he devoted those powers and exertions to the illustration of the "noblest study of mankind,"—of man, in his faculties, in his social and civil relations,—which he applied to the propagation of party creeds, his utility to society must have been much greater. The accession of delight and instruction, from the labours of Burke, investigating and elucidating general truths, must

have been much more important than from his labours in supporting particular notions.

“ To party he gave what was meant for mankind.”

Two sets of writers attacked this pamphlet :— the friends of the Court, who denied the existence of the secret cabinet ; and the republicans, who inveighed against its aristocratical tendency and opposition to reform. The celebrated Mrs. Macaulay answered this tract, and descanted with much speculative ingenuity on the just ends of Government, “ the Usurpations of Establishments,” “ the Rights of Man,” “ complete Reform in Parliament and Government,” “ Political Justice,” and many other topics that have since been hackneyed in democratical writings, from the bold, energetic, acute, dangerous, sophistry of Paine, and the ingenious, but impracticable, theories of Godwin, to the ignorant declamation of Thelwall. The aristocratic Burke of those days was assailed, by the republicans of that period, with as much violence as the aristocratic Burke of latter times by the republicans of this period. The author of a Biographical Preface to Burke's Posthumous Works asserts that the *Thoughts on the Discontents* mark the political tenets of Burke to have been congenial to those recently attacked by democratic writers. To me some of the opinions appear coincident, some opposite. That government ought to be in the hands of an aristocracy of rank and property is con-

sistent with his late doctrines. The importance ascribed by him to the voice of the people, his encouragement of their petitions, his opinion that the House of Commons ought to be an image of popular opinion and an organ of popular will, may be apparently, but is not really inconsistent, as, I trust, will be found when these come to be discussed, with his late doctrines.

This was the first subject on which Burke and Johnson published opposite opinions. The *ALARM*, which Johnson calls *false*, and the *Discontents*, which Burke supposes well founded, were nearly the same. On considering these performances, not as consisting of true or false reasoning, but as indicative of knowledge and talents, it must appear to an impartial reader, that though Johnson displays equal acuteness, equal strength, and more poignancy, Burke shews much more of expansion and of profound investigation; and that from his treatise a much greater accession of political knowledge and principle may be derived than from Johnson's. It may be said that attack is more expatiatory than defence; but Johnson, in his *False Alarm*, attacks as well as defends. His subject admitted of great expansion: he might have taken as wide a range through the effects of *popular licentiousness* as Burke did through those of *court favouritism*. In fact, with a memory as retentive, with a judgment as strong and discriminating

as Burke's, equal to any man in his writings on general ethics and criticism, he did not equally excel in political discussion.

While Burke and Johnson differed on subjects of political expediency, they co-operated in performing the duties of private friendship and justice. They this summer appeared together at the Old Bailey, to give evidence to the character of a gentleman tried for his life. Mr. Barette, so well known in the literary world, had been attacked by a woman of the town, near the Haymarket. In endeavouring to get away, he was surrounded by three fellows, who supported the woman in her impudence, and, with much scurrilous abuse, struck him. They continued to molest him; on which, apprehensive of his life, he drew a knife, warning them to keep off: a scuffle ensuing, he stabbed two of them, of whom one died. Burke and Johnson, with several others, bore testimony to the goodness of his general character and the peaceableness of his disposition. The jury considered the homicide as in self-defence, and he was accordingly acquitted. Barette was very intimate with the members of the literary club, especially with Burke and Johnson, and highly valued by those illustrious personages.

The internal commotions were beginning, in some degree, to subside; but proceedings arising from them still occupied the public attention. Affairs in America were growing more and more gloomy.

Lord North was now Prime Minister, a man of pleasing and engaging manners, agreeable disposition, and most amiable private character. Distinguished for wit and readiness of argument, for classical knowledge, for taste and for elegant literature ; but perhaps fitter for the enjoyment and participation of enlightened discourse in private societies, than for the conduct of affairs at so difficult a juncture.

His talents, indeed, were probably sufficient for his situation. Extraordinary abilities are not so absolutely necessary in the administration of government, as attention, experience, prudence, and vigour. These qualities, with sound judgement, may fit the possessor for the highest offices ; whereas, without them, the greatest genius is insufficient. The goodness and wisdom of Providence, intending human happiness, puts the means, in a great measure, within our reach : the efficacy of conduct of every sort does not depend so much on *force of understanding*, which is not in our power, as on the conformation of WILL, which is in our power. In eloquence, Lord North had few superiors in the house ; but his political notions were wavering and unsettled. His counsels were fluctuating, being generally the result of particular occasion, and not the efforts of a great, consistent, and well concerted plan. His conduct was unsteady, now feeble, now rash, now conceding, now coercing, with considera-

ble talents, and many virtues, he was the cause of great disasters. His most formidable opponent in the House of Commons, and by far the greatest orator it contained, was Burke. On subjects of deliberative wisdom, on subjects addressing themselves not to his prejudices and passions as a party man, but to his knowledge and understanding as a senator, Burke's views were grand and comprehensive. He considered the question with all its relations, profoundly investigated cause, and deduced consequences. The speeches of this illustrious orator were eminent for exactness, extent, and multiplicity of information; for copiousness and brilliancy of imagery; for readiness, acuteness, versatility, and strength of argument; for wideness of range, and profound reflection; for command of language and facility of communication. Johnson observes, that genius does not consist in the preponderancy of any one of the intellectual faculties, but in the excellence of all. On viewing the whole mental exertions of Burke, one would not have the hardihood to decide whether memory, imagination, or reason, was the most conspicuous; but most men, on attending to the operations of any one of the powers, would esteem it superior to the others. From the most minute and technical details, to the most enlarged philosophy, physical and moral, and its application to practice, he was always completely master of the subject. In speaking on the

changes of a turnpike road, or on the revolutions of nations; in explaining the process of a manufacture, or the progress of the human mind, he never failed to shew that the whole and every part, the ends and means, the relation of means to means, and of means to ends, were all within his grasp. When exhibition of man was requisite, either of the individual or species, either as modified by particular professions, arts, circumstances, or situation, or in a general society, he drew a just, discriminate, strong, and striking picture. Often, indeed, the fulness of his mind and the elasticity of his fancy would lead him farther than was necessary, for information or argument, on the mere subject of discussion. But if some of his thoughts, images, or sentiments, might be irrelative to the individual object proposed, they did not fail to produce some purpose of general pleasure or utility. If he did *digress*, you might be instructed, and must be delighted; and you were sure soon to return to the matter in discussion: as at his own Beaconsfield, you might deviate to survey woods and lawns, and luxuriant meadows and rich corn-fields, but you could soon regain the straight road; a road leading to the reservoir of learning and sound philosophy. The rapidity of Burke's associating principle often brought together subjects slightly related. The fulness and flow of his capacious mind rendered his speeches very long, and to some very tiresome.

To follow his details, relish his imagery, and grasp his reasoning, often required an extent of knowledge, a vigour of fancy, and a compass of intellect not granted to ordinary men. Besides, there are seasons, when even the wisest men may be weary of wisdom. He frequently, after the night was far advanced, began a speech which he carried on for three hours :—

“Two deep for his hearers, he went on refining,

“And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.”

In conversation, Burke excelled as much as in public speaking. He could accommodate his discourse to the capacities, and habits, and knowledge of the person addressed. He could convey information either to the simple or the refined, and instruction either to the clown or the sage. Dr. Johnson, while he declares his opinion, that if Burke were to go into a barn, the threshers would think him the wisest man they ever saw, testifies that he himself never was in Burke's company without departing the wiser. That sage, who considered conversation as a competition of intellectual powers, declared he was never stimulated to such exertion as when contending with Burke. Once, when he was ill, and unable to exert himself as much as usual, without fatigue, Burke being mentioned, he said, “Edmund calls forth all my powers ;

were I to see him now it would kill me." It is to be observed, that the effects of Burke's conversation arose entirely from its *intrinsic excellence*. There was no extrinsic aid, *no pomposity of manner*, to add apparent to real force. There was no *bow-wow* way to make ordinary observers fancy that it contained more strength than it did. Pungency often adds to the appearance of force: Burke could be pointed, but was not so habitually. His conversation, like his speeches, was an unaffected effusion of knowledge, imagery, sentiment, reasoning, philosophy. The susceptibility of his mind made his passions very easily moved. His irritability did not, however, show itself often in private conversation. Even in the contention of public debate, when his heat hurried him into expressions of which calm judgment could not approve, his asperity was either the occasional retort of irritation, or the moral reproof of real or fancied delinquency, not the planned attack of deliberate malice.

Lord North, in order to tranquillize America, proposed, in the beginning of his administration, to repeal the obnoxious laws of the former Ministry, and to reserve the duty on tea, merely to maintain the authority of Parliament. The duty was in itself of no great importance, but in its principle and consequences of the highest moment. The mercantile interest had suffered by the associations of the Americans, not to

take the article taxed. Lord North's was a short-sighted expedient, intended to remove a particular inconvenience ; but not a wise plan of general conciliation, by removing the causes of the discontents. As the Americans denied the parliamentary right of taxing them, the discontinuance of several duties did not tend to remove their dissatisfaction, while the smallest remained. The three-pence a pound on tea was equally inconsistent with the opinion of the Americans on taxation, as a high duty on that and every other article would have been. Lord North's measure was impolitic in two views : if the object was reconciliation, all the duties ought to have been taken off ; if maintenance of the rights of Parliament, it was a diminution of revenue to no purpose. It was a *half measure*, and, as half measures usually are, was ultimately ineffectual. Burke's speech on this proposition contained the most brilliant wit and sarcastic humour, with the most extensive knowledge and forcible reasoning. Lord North's scheme was, he said, a heterogeneous mixture of concession and coercion ; of concession not tending to conciliate, and of coercion that could not be carried into execution ; at once exciting hatred for the intention, and contempt for the weakness. " Thus, the malignity of your will is abhorred, and the debility of your power is contemned ; and parlia-

ment, which you persuade to sanction your follies, is exposed to dishonour."

As his great genius was more and more matured by experience, he became, in estimating plans for the conduct of affairs, less and less attentive to questions of abstraction. At the commencement of his political life, he advised a declaration of right, while he was for renouncing its beneficial exercise. His wisdom was now of too enlarged a nature and too practical an operation, to dwell on barren generalities and metaphysical distinctions. Although no man could more easily and more perfectly generalize, yet in matters of counsel and action, he, in applying a general rule, always took into consideration the case with its causes, peculiar circumstances, and probable consequences, as to be expected from an appeal to experience. To use his own language, he regarded abstract competency as subservient to moral competency. Whatever had been found productive on the whole of good effects, he recommended to be done; of bad, to be avoided. In going over Lord North's proposition, he did not so much consider the question of right as of expediency. A maxim of his, remarked by the penetrating Editor of the Posthumous Works, that to INNOVATE is not to REFORM, was applied to this measure. The Americans, he said, have been very serviceable to Britain under the old system; do not, therefore, let us rashly seek a

new. Our commercial interests have been hitherto very greatly promoted by our friendly intercourse with the colonies ; do not let us endanger possession for contingency, DO NOT LET US SUBSTITUTE UNTRIED THEORIES FOR A SYSTEM EXPERIMENTALLY ASCERTAINED TO BE USEFUL.

The changes from metaphysical disquisition to practical consideration is not peculiar to Burke ; it is a common progression in wise minds, instructed in philosophy, as they become more experienced by increase of years, converse with mankind, and habituation to the business of life.

Lord North's object seems to have been too much to please both parties to gratify the supporters of parliamentary supremacy, and to restore satisfaction to the colonies. Either a more thorough knowledge of the state and sentiments of the Americans, the capacity of drawing just conclusions from what he knew, or determined resolution to act according to his own information and reasoning, were wanting to Lord North. Many, knowing his abilities, have concluded the latter to be the case ; and have thought his measures respecting America the dictates of less able but more powerful courtiers. Whatever was the cause, the effect was most unfortunate to these realms.

Proceedings relative to the freedom of the press afforded much discussion in the House of Commons. The debates turning on constitutional points, Burke took a very distinguished

part. Among many printers who republished Junius's letters from the original, in the *Public Advertiser*, one was Almon; a man obnoxious to government on account of personal attacks upon some of the ministry, and the supposed favourites of the Court. He copied the letter to the king into a monthly magazine. Although it had been copied before into all the newspapers in the kingdom, none of the publishers had been prosecuted:—but an action was commenced against Almon for his republication. From the object prosecuted, this step was imputed by the Opposition to resentment, more than to the sense of justice. If justice had been the motive, it was alledged that the publisher would have been the first and principal object.

It was contended that the Attorney-General's official power of filing informations was too extensive to be compatible with freedom. A bill was proposed to modify and limit that law-officer's power; by explaining and amending an act of William and Mary, for preventing malicious informations in the Court of King's Bench. In supporting this bill, Burke made a speech replete with legal knowledge, shewing his thorough acquaintance with crown law in general, and with particular acts, in their history, detail, spirit, and constitutional tendency. Serious information and reasoning were enlivened by wit and humour. Some of the opposite party had dwelt very much on the an-

tiquity of the power lodged in the Attorney-General. Burke, though a reverencer of ancient usage when found generally accompanied with good, yet not reverencing it when productive of evil, and not conceiving the antiquity in this case proved, placed the argument in a variety of ridiculous lights. "Several gentlemen (he said) have expressed a kind of superstitious veneration for this power, on account of its supposed antiquity; as the father of Scribnerus extolled the rust and canker which exalted a brazen pot-lid into the shield of a hero. I hope to scowr off the false marks of antiquity which have made this power venerable, as effectually as the honest house-maid scoured off the false honours of the pot-lid." While Burke impugns the power of the Attorney-General, he inveighs against licentious libels. He characterises the North Briton with a severity at once witty and just. "Number forty-five of the North Briton is a spiritless though virulent performance, a mere mixture of vinegar and water, at once sour and vapid." When he attacks ministerial oppressions and usurpations, he assigns, as the most immediately hurtful effects of their conduct, the incitement of popular sedition and violence. In descanting on libels, he takes occasion to speak of JUNIUS, in a manner that implies that he was not the author, or thought himself secure of concealment: "How comes JUNIUS to have broke through the cobwebs of the law, and to range uncon-

trouled and unpunished through the land? The myrmidons of the Court pursue him in vain. They will not spend their time on me or you; they disdain such vermin, when the *mighty bear of the forest*, that has broke their toils, is before them. When I saw his attack upon the King my blood run cold; not, that there are not in that composition many bold truths, by which a wise Prince might profit: it was the rancour and venom with which I was struck. When I expected from his daring flight his fall and final ruin, I behold him *soaring higher*, and coming souse upon both houses of parliament; nor has he dreaded the terrors of your brow, Sir,* King, Lords, and Commons, are the sport of his fury."

Doctrines promulgated by some of the judges, particularly by the great Mansfield, were, by many friends of the constitution, deemed inimical to the rights of juries. It was maintained on the Bench, that in cases of libels juries were to judge of the facts and tendency only, and not of the intention; and that the truths of the allegations could not be pled in abatement of the guilt of defamatory writings. Sergeant Glynn made a motion for an enquiry into the practice of the judges, and for ascertaining and declaring the law of the land. This motion,

* Sir Fletcher Norton, the Speaker, of no very pleasing aspect.

though somewhat different in detail, was nearly the same in principle as the bill since proposed by Mr. Erskine, and passed into a law. Burke argued, that the power exercised by the Chief-Justice and his imitators was inimical to personal security, and arrogated to judges appointed by the crown the right vested by the fundamental laws in juries; that thus a man might be deprived of his liberty and property without the judgment of his peers. After deducing the rights of juries to find the guilt as well as the fact, he went into the practice of our greatest times, since the abolition of the Star-Chamber, and shewed it to recognize this fundamental right of juries. The motion was negatived.

Two speeches were this session delivered by Burke on the conduct of Ministry respecting Falkland Island. These speeches take a very wide range, and display the vast extent of his knowledge. As to the merits of the question, Burke seems, in this case, not equal to his private friend and public opponent, Johnson, although generally superior to him in political discussion. The Doctor demonstrates, that from the magnificence of the object, after the concessions of Spain, war would have been extremely impolitic. Johnson's observations (after discussing the main question) on the duty of Ministers, in every case consistent with national safety and honour, to avoid war, are

equal to any of the productions of that great and good man's wisdom and philanthropy.

Although Mr. Burke and Dr. Johnson disagreed concerning political measures, internal and external, they still continued mutual friendship. Indeed the disagreement in principle was rather apparent than real. The Tory was the supporter of personal independence ; and regarded political liberty, as far as it appeared to him to produce private liberty and happiness. Though averse to resistance, unless under great oppression, he admitted that "*if the abuse be enormous, Nature will rise up, and, claiming her original rights, overturn a corrupt political system.*" The Whig was the friend of subordination, the reverencer of rank and dignity, and the enemy of popular violence. Johnson did not maintain the duty of obedience to Kings and rulers on the ground of any divine right they had to such obedience ; but on account of the conduciveness of the obedience to the happiness of the governed. Burke allowed that it was the duty and interest of the governed to obey their governors, unless in cases of very flagrant oppression ; and considered the greatest evil of certain ministerial measures to be their tendency to arouse the people to forcible resistance. "A wise Tory and a wise Whig," Johnson himself observes, "in their politics rarely agree; their principles are the same, their modes of thinking are different: sufferance and irresist-

ance must always be determined to be right or wrong by the circumstances of the case ; and not by antecedent definitions and abstract principles.

Although the political differences of Johnson and Burke did not interrupt affection and veneration, their diversity of opinion, combined with the rough manners of the lexicographer, frequently led to asperity ; but generally witty rather than serious. Burke displayed equal force of wit and argument, but much greater suavity of manners. Dr. Robertson observed that Johnson's jokes were not the stabs of malevolence, but *the rebukes of the righteous, which are like excellent oil, and break not the head.*—" Oil," replied Burke, " oil of vitriol."

Mr. Boswell is at great pains to prove that Burke possessed wit. In his conclusion most readers will agree, but not on the grounds which he adduces. The instances which he details are puns, at best mixed, not pure wit.—Some of the examples cited by Mr. Boswell seem to be introduced as much for the purpose of recording certain observations for which he values himself, as of illustrating the wit of Burke.

One day Boswell trying to make a definition of man, that would distinguish him from all other animals, calls him " a cooking animal"—a man alone can dress a good dinner, and every man is more or less a cook, in seasoning what

he himself eats. "Your definition," replied Burke, "is good; I now see the full force of the common proverb, 'there is reason in the roasting of eggs.'" Boswell afterwards speaking in the club of an intention he had of going to view the Isle of Man, Burke repeated Pope's words:

"The proper study of mankind is MAN."

Boswell telling him that he had seen at a Blue-Stocking Club a number of ladies sitting round a worthy and tall friend of their's (Johnson), and listening to his literature. "Ay," said Burke, "like maids round a May-pole."

I have already noticed instances, not of puns or conceits, but of great wit in some of his speeches; and shall, as I proceed, have occasion to quote more. His wit is often joined with humour, either light and pleasant, or satirical and contemptuous. Speaking of Lord North's determined adherence, merely because he had adopted it, to a plan of coercion, proved, from its effect, to be hurtful, he compared him to Dr. Sangrado, when Gil Blas represented to him that death was the consequence of his specifics, and advised him to alter his method. "No," says the Doctor, "I cannot leave off warm water and bleeding (although my patients do not often recover) since I have written a book in its favour." Johnson mentions a more uniformly pleasing qualification for company than wit and humour, which Burke was allowed, by all that knew him, eminently to possess.—

“Burke,” he said, “is constantly the same; never what we call hum-drum, never unwilling to begin to talk, nor in a hurry to leave it off.”

This year it was proposed by Mr. Strahan to the Secretaries of the Treasury, to introduce Dr. Johnson into parliament, as a man that would be a very powerful champion for Administration. Ministers, though they had experienced the force of his assistance, probably not thinking his habits and manners consistent with parliamentary decorum, did not accede to the proposition. Burke being asked his opinion concerning the propriety of Johnson’s becoming a member of parliament, replied, “If he had come early into the house, he certainly would have been the greatest speaker that ever was there; but then, that having been so long used to the compression of conversation, he might not have equally excelled in the expansion of argument, which the complication of matter often requires in public debates.” It is probable, that if Dr. Johnson had procured a seat in the senate, such an opponent might have contracted the expatiation of Burke, and induced him to converge the bright rays of his eloquence into a narrower focus, to give them all possible force. The powers of the competitor would not have permitted Atalanta to deviate far from the direct road in pursuit of golden apples. Mr. Boswell mentions this opinion of Burke concern-

ing the *lateness* of Strahan's wish to have Johnson introduced into parliament, narrates several observations made by him in the club and elsewhere, as anecdotes worthy of being recorded, and as displaying him in discourse and in private society. He tells us that Dr. Johnson and he once had a dispute concerning the comparative merits of Homer and Virgil's poems. Burke admitted the superiority of Homer's genius, but not of his work. Both brought forward the full force of their powers of philosophical criticism, and probably from emulation might exceed what either would have done without the stimulus of such opposition. That Burke really was convinced of the superiority of Virgil's poetry to that of Homer, I have not heard. The sublimity, force, rapidity, exhibition of character, and variety of Homer, were not less akin to his own genius, than the beauty, majesty, and pathetic of the Mantuan Bard.

There was obviously a nearer approximation in Johnson's mind to some of the qualities of Homer than to those of Virgil. He was much more eminent for teaching right and wrong, than exhibiting elegance and tenderness. He forcibly inculcates—

“ Quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe,

“ Quid utile, quid non.

“ Molle atque facetum”

are by no means the characteristics of his works.

Mr. Boswell very justly regrets that a criticism has not been preserved, which must have marked the positive and distinctive merits of the Grecian and Roman more ably than any criticism concerning their comparative powers and works that we have on record. A man of equal comprehensiveness and force of understanding with either, though less habituated to critical disquisitions, has, since that time, had an argument with Burke on the same subject.

Burke, thoroughly acquainted with the Greek and Roman classics, preferred Virgil and Lucretius to any of the Latin poets, and could repeat the greater part of both. It was not merely as a man of taste, nor even as a man of feeling, that he was rapturously fond of Virgil; not the beauty and tenderness only of that enchanting poet, but his philosophy rendered him a peculiar favourite of Burke. The pathos of the fourth, the sublime ethics of the sixth *Aeneid*, and the philosophical passages of the *Georgics*, he could repeat from beginning to end. Although he by no means approved of Lucretius's theology, he was charmed with many parts of his poem, particularly with his just and forcible description of the effects of superstition. Brilliant as was his imagination, he delighted more in those parts of poetical works which afforded knowledge physical or moral, especially the latter, and general principles, than with those parts that abound in imagery. He read Horace's satires, and his

critical and ethical epistles, with more pleasure than his most poetical odes.

Although he shewed himself thoroughly acquainted with the eloquence and history of the Romans, and, as a man of taste and genius, must have been pleased with such monuments of excellence, neither the Latin historians or even the Latin orators were his peculiar favourites. Admiring the force and philosophy of Tacitus, he disliked his style, and indeed all styles in which there was an appearance of study or affectation. In Homer, although he chiefly admired the sublimity, yet he was most delighted with the pictures of characters and manners. On account of its more minute delineation of antient society, he read the *Odyssey* more frequently than the *Iliad*. He was deeply conversant in the philosophy of Greece, abstruse and practical. In the earlier part of his life he devoted himself principally to the former, but afterwards to the latter. Which of the great historians he mostly admired I have not heard. It is almost needless to say that Demosthenes was his favourite orator.— Among dramatic writers, Euripides was more relished by him than even Sophocles: the poet who described men as they were, than the poet who drew them as they ought to be—the copier from experience than from theory.

Human nature was Burke's favourite study: those writings he perused with the most exquisite delight, which exhibited particular characters,

general manners, the cognitive and active principles of the human mind, and their operation in the relations and duties of society. This predilection for pictures of moral nature might be farther illustrated from the modern writers whom he preferred: among these were Bacon and Shakespeare, of the highest order; and of a high, though inferior order, Fielding, Le Sage, and, especially, Addison. Concerning Fielding he differed with his friend Johnson, and preferred him to Richardson: the painter from real life to the painter from his own fancy. His *precise* opinion of Pope I have not learned: Swift he did not relish as a describer of human nature, because he only gave one side.

The communicativeness of Mr. Boswell often brings out particulars respecting himself, which many writers would have spared. He informs us, that when he was proposed to be a member of the club, Mr. Burke objected to him, *as not being fit*. Johnson, however, being desirous to have Boswell admitted, the judgment of Burke gave way, in this instance, to the inclination of his friend. After Mr. Boswell was admitted into the Gerard-street club, Burke treated him with that easy and frank politeness, which was habitual to him, which the good-natured and obliging disposition of Boswell deserved, and which he construed to be intimate friendship. The eager desire of Boswell to be acquainted with men of eminence, received from his own sanguine

temper more gratification than from the actual notice of the personages whose company he courted. Common civility from such he often fancied to be a most distinguishing regard: no wonder then that the engaging manners of Burke should pass with him for marks of peculiar attachment to himself. Great men are generally introduced by Mr. Boswell, in order to talk of himself, a subject on which he always dwelt with peculiar pleasure. His egotism, however, is not the effect of arrogant haughtiness, but of good-natured vanity. He certainly has been of considerable advantage to the public by the many facts he has recorded concerning other great men, as well as the object of his adoration. If there be no great clearness of arrangement, or comprehensive views of whole characters and subjects, there is pleasantness and utility of collection. The public may not be much entertained with the history of the Ashbourn dead cat, or of Veronica, the writer's great grandmother, but are pleased and instructed by authentic narratives of conversations between the most eminent men of the age. Those who care little about the genealogical history of Auchinleck and Balmuto, about the chieftainship of Macleod or of Raasay, are pleased to be informed concerning Beauclerk, Goldsmith, Johnson, and Burke.

Burke entertained a poor opinion of the Beggar's Opera. He allowed it, on the whole, very

inconsiderable merit. He thought its intellectual excellence small, and totally overbalanced by its moral defects. He did not admit the common-place objection, that it was calculated to increase the number of robbers. Those who betake themselves to the highway, he thought it probable, are impelled by much more powerful motives than the imitation of a fictitious robber, exhibited on the stage. It is indeed equally improbable that a man should become a highwayman from seeing Macheath, as that a woman should become a prostitute from seeing Jenny Diver. The mischief consisted, he thought, in arraying vice in agreeable colours, and representing the greatest crimes without exciting the proper detestation; that there is more pains taken to shew that others are greater villains than thieves and highwaymen, than to teach and induce these to refrain from their villainies. Such a comparison might probably appear to the perspicacious understanding and powerful invention of Burke as of obvious recollection if true, or easy conception if feigned. He might perceive that if, according to the hypothesis of the *Beggar's Opera*, the principles of a robber are similar to those of a courtier, it required merely common observation to assimilate the character; but Burke did not admit the fact. The *Beggar's Opera*, with its sequel, *Polly*, represents mankind, in civilized society, as universally vicious; and, in a savage

state only as virtuous. The only good men, by Gay's exhibition, are Maroons. Burke had formed a very different opinion of polished society, and uniformly maintained that, as his experience increased, he had learned to think more favourably of the civilized world. Gibbon has an observation on the *Beggar's Opera*, which, whether just or not, is new and ingenious: "It has (he said) had a beneficial effect in refining highwaymen, and making them less ferocious, more polite; in short, more like gentlemen." Mr. Courtenay, on hearing this, said, with his usual happiness of witty allusion, "then Gay was the Orpheus of highwaymen."

Full as the mind of Burke was, it was daily and hourly receiving accessions. Untainted by the contagion of fashionable vice and frivolity, he directed to reading and conversation those hours which were not employed in parliamentary duties, in necessary business, and in salubrious exercise. From whatever he read he derived instruction; every other metal he transmuted into that malleable, ductile, and valuable metal of which his own mind consisted. He generally read with a pen in his hand, to make extracts and observations, especially the latter. A most wonderful memory retained whatever he read; and the quick comprehensiveness of his mind immediately saw its class and tendency. Perhaps no man in Britain had such a facility of acquiring knowledge, with so indefa-

tigable application. He had an exquisite taste for the fine arts; and was deemed by Sir Joshua Reynold's the best judge of pictures he ever knew. Much of his leisure time was spent in Sir Joshua's house. The amusement in which he most delighted was the theatre. He did not, like Johnson, condemn scenical personation; he had a high admiration of theatrical excellence: his taste was gratified by the perfect imitation of human characters and passions, which a Garrick and a Siddons exhibited. Part of the recess he spent at Beaconsfield: there his taste appeared in various fine improvements of natural beauty. But higher qualities procured him the respect and love of all within the sphere of his action; not those only who knew and could appreciate his talents, and who, perhaps dazzled by the lustre of his genius, might see his conduct imperfectly; but those who knew nothing of him but as a country gentleman. The peasants, who were benefitted by his counsels; the labourers, for whose employment, and the melioration of whose condition, he was daily devising means; the poor, who found him a bountiful benefactor; all joined in praising his wisdom and blessing his goodness. He planned various institutions, some of which I shall, in the sequel, detail, for making the poorer mechanics and labourers save a little from their wages or profits to assist each other in sickness or poverty, and give to

their children the education necessary or useful in their humble stations. He was himself, in country as in town, a man of study and business. That time was given to relaxation which remained from active duties. *Otium laborque non temporibus divisa; quod labori supererat otio datum.* His objects at his villa and in the senate were the same,—to promote the welfare of that portion of mankind on which his actions might operate. Burke, in every part of his conduct, shewed that the wisdom which he pursued was practical. He was uniformly the enemy of speculative innovations. At Beaconsfield he bestowed much attention on farming. The estate would let at about 600*l.* a year; three-fourths of it he cultivated himself. As a farmer he pursued that plan which had been found, by experience, to produce the best corn and cattle; and was, in fact, without any unusual expence, one of the most successful farmers in the county. When in town he had his mutton, poultry, and all other meats, except beef; also the various productions of the dairy and gardens, from his own estate, brought by his own horses and carts. The same horses which served for his carriage were employed on his farms. Both in town and country he was remarkable for hospitality—an hospitality of real benevolence: there was no parade of *stile*, no ostentatious display of side-boards, no sumptuous entertainments; but every thing plain, substantial, and

agreeable, with kind looks, kind manners, and a hearty welcome. He would often insist, in town, on eight or ten of his acquaintances going home with him to eat *mutton-chops* or *beef-steaks*; and, on such occasions, literally gave such dinners—dinners, with the zest of his company, to which few could be found equal. He liked a cheerful glass, but never drank to excess. During dinner his beverage was water, and afterwards generally claret or some other light wine, and he seldom exceeded a bottle. His conversation was always so animated and so flowing, his spirits so exhilarated, that the wine could make no addition.

His benevolence extended itself to common beggars. In walking in the streets he generally disposed of all the silver he had in his pocket to the various mendicants who solicited his charity. He imputed inattention to such petitions not to the policy of discouraging beggars, but to unwillingness to part with money.

Both as a student and a man of business he had unceasing industry. He was an early riser, and used to dispatch many important affairs while some of his friends were recruiting themselves from the watching of the tavern or the ferment of the gaming-house. In his way to the House he frequently called on a friend equal in ability even to himself, but very inferior in point of regularity, and found him at three o'clock be-

ginning his breakfast. "There's Charles, (he would say) whilst I am exhausted by reading and business, he is quite fresh; it is no wonder he is so much more vigorous in the House."

Part of the summer was frequently devoted to revisiting his native country, or in viewing different places in England. He sometimes travelled in the stage-coach, and was an exquisitely agreeable companion. He knew the history, physical and moral, of every place he passed through, and entertained his fellow travellers with pleasing or useful anecdotes and observations, according to their capacity or inclination. I have heard from a lady that once came in the coach with him a considerable part of the road from Yorkshire, without knowing who he was, that he fixed the attention of all the passengers by his great fund of local knowledge, and the anecdotes with which it was interspersed. They all concurred in thinking him the most entertaining man they had ever met. Seeing him afterwards in London, she found that he who had delighted a stage-coach company was a man

"The applause of listening senates to command."

In summer, 1772, he visited the Continent: there he first saw the fair Marie Antoinette, whose accomplishments and graces made such an impression on a mind feelingly alive to the sublime and beautiful, and whose charms and misfortunes he has since described with so pathetic eloquence.

The literary and political eminence of Burke rendered him, while in France, courted by the antimonarchical and antihierarchical philosophers of the time. One of the subjects of discussion between him and the philosophers of France was the merit of Beattie's *Essay on Truth*. He seems to have been as partial *for* Beattie as *against* Hume. To an impartial reader it might appear surprising, that men, possessed themselves of such powers of reasoning as Burke and Johnson, should admire the declamatory writings of Beattie, if he were not to recollect that the wisest men do not always judge as wise men, but frequently form opinions which persons, much their inferiors, can perceive to be erroneous. It might be attributed to their regard for religion, that they so much venerated its zealous defender: but were that the sole cause, they would have estimated its champions by their ability, and preferred the logical closeness of Campbell, and the cautious modest profoundness of Reid, to the confident vivacity of Beattie.* But though the *reasonings* of Beattie be neither very profound nor very ingenious, his *doctrines* are just and salutary.

* It is said that, besides his zeal for orthodoxy, his vanity as an author prompted Beattie to abuse Hume. Hume, on perusing some of his poems, called them *milk and water* verses; which, it said, the divine never forgave. We find the arguments of Beattie much more frequently quoted, and his book much more highly esteemed, by pious well-disposed men, of no very great reach, than by able men (except Johnson and Burke), even of the Christian persuasion.

It was the doctrines more than the reasonings which the infidel followers of Voltaire, Helvetius, and Rousseau, attacked. In the religious scepticism and political theories of these writers Burke's sagacious mind saw the probable overthrow of religion and government. His sentiments he took occasion the following session to communicate to the House of Commons. That subject not relating to any immediate business before the House, or to any danger to common minds, imminent or even distantly probable, his speech was not taken down with the usual accuracy. A copy, however, is extant, of which the following summary is given by the editors of his Posthumous Works. "He pointed out the conspiracy of atheism to the watchful jealousy of governments. He professed that he was not over fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions ; but if ever it was to be raised, it should be against those enemies of their kind, who would take from us the noblest prerogative of our nature, that of being a religious animal." Then comes the following quotation from the speech. "Already, under the systematic attacks of those men, I see many of the props of good government beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name," ("he recommended that a grand alliance should be

formed among all believers") "against those ministers of rebellious darkness, who were endeavouring to shake all the works of God, established in beauty and order."

These were opinions and sentiments very inimical, if not to *a* revolution in France, at least to *the* revolution which has actually taken place, with all its concomitant circumstances.

This session Sir Henry Houghton made a motion for relieving the Dissenters from subscription and the penal laws. The supporters of the church doctrines brought forward the usual arguments ; that Dissenters were not actually liable to the punishments annexed to the penal statutes ; and that an attempt to set aside the articles was an attack on Christianity. Burke combatted these arguments with energetic eloquence, and a warmth rising almost to enthusiasm. " The Dissenters (he said) enjoy liberty by connivance. What is *liberty by connivance*, but *a temporary relaxation of slavery*? Is this a sort of LIBERTY *calculated for the meridian of ENGLAND*? You are desirous to keep the rod hanging over Dissenters' heads, at the very instant you assure them they shall never smart under its stripes. Why not release them from the dread of these penal statutes, the cruelty of which shocks your generous natures so much, that you think it incumbent on you to declare they should never be put into execution? The question answers itself ; to cavil at its propriety

is to carp at truth, and elude conviction. As to toleration being an attack on Christianity, it is an assertion contrary to truth and history. By toleration Christianity flourished." (This proposition and its converse he proves by an historical detail) "The want of toleration has lessened the number of believers; I would have all Protestants united, that we may be the better able to make a common cause against Infidels. THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND HAS NOT A FIRMER FRIEND THAN MYSELF. I wish her head may reach that heaven, to which she would conduct us; but I would also wish her family as numerous as possible. I would have her with wide extended arms receive every believer, not with unnatural austerity reproach her offspring, and drive them to seek ease, pleasure, and comfort, in the barlot lap of Infidelity."

In these opinions and sentiments there was liberality without laxity. From Burke's support of the Dissenters during a part of his life, and his disapprobation of some of their proceedings during another part, his detractors have endeavoured to prove that he was inconsistent. This is a conclusion of very hasty reasoning. Unless it be proved that the Dissenters in 1772, and those in 1790, maintained exactly the same opinions, and in the same circumstances of society, Burke's support of their

cause at the one time, and opposition to it at the other, cannot be evinced to be inconsistent. He who vindicates toleration may resist encroachment. The Dissenters in 1772 solicited protection: before 1790 some of them had avowed their expectations that the established church would be subverted. The difference in the former period consisted chiefly in modes of worship and ecclesiastical government, more than in the substance of articles of faith and practical precepts: in the latter, sentiments were publicly avowed inimical to the existence of both church and state. Although all Dissenters were far from having imbibed such notions, or formed such intentions; yet, as many, and especially the leading men among them, had done so, wisdom dictated a caution before unnecessary. Besides, there are states of society in which it would be proper to counteract the very opinions that it would be right to cherish in different circumstances. In the early part of this reign, the power of the executive branch of the constitution was preponderant: wisdom directed and patriotism prompted their votaries to throw their weight into the popular scale. Soon after the French revolution, doctrines prevailed, tending to elevate the popular branch much beyond its due proportion. The same wisdom directed and the same patriotism prompted its votaries to counteract that prevalence. BURKE'S CONDUCT AROSE FROM IDEN-

TITY OF PRINCIPLE, VARYING ITS OPERATIONS IN DIVERSITY OF CIRCUMSTANCES.

Sir Henry Houghtons's motion passed through the House of Commons, but was thrown out in the House of Lords.

The discontinuance of other duties, as Burke had foreseen, was far from satisfying the Americans, whilst that on tea was reserved. They considered the relinquishment as extorted by their resistance, not as granted to their solicitations. The remaining duty on tea they thought a maintenance by Parliament of the principle of taxation, while a more convenient opportunity was waited for extending its operation. Their distrust of the mother country continued. Associations were formed to discourage the use of tea and to resist its importation.

East India affairs, in the session of 1772, became a principal subject of parliamentary deliberation. The proceedings of the legislature respecting India, at that time, constitute an important epoch in the history of this reign : not only for the new regulations for the management of the East, but for bringing to a crisis our disputes with the West : they constitute also an epoch in the life of Burke, as he now commenced the investigation of subjects which afterwards occupied so much of his labours.

The abuses of the Company's servants in India had raised an outcry in this country.

Burke made accurate inquiries into the alledged oppressions and cruelties, and, by oral testimony and written documents, acquired a very exact and extensive knowledge of the history, actual state, abuses, means of correction, and general interests of British India.

Parliament found the affairs of the Company of such complication, difficulty, and importance, that they chose a Select Committee, to inquire, during the recess, into the condition of the commercial and territorial possessions. The ruling Directors, apprehensive that the full disclosure of the abuses of their servants would induce Government to intermeddle in concerns hitherto guided by themselves and their creatures, thought of means to prevent the interference. Hoping that, by reposing unlimited confidence in a popular man, they might stop the public clamour, and also take from Government the most plausible pretext for interfering in their affairs, they proposed to send Burke to India with discretionary powers, as the head of a commission for the reform of abuses. He refused the appointment, determined to adhere to his party.

Besides the plea of the misconduct of their servants, there was another reason in the finances of the India Company, for which Government proposed to take a direction in the management of their affairs. Their pecuniary concerns had, according to Ministry, become

very much embarrassed. Being unable to make good their payments, they applied to Parliament for assistance, and represented that their difficulties were owing chiefly to the want of the usual market for their tea in America ; in consequence of which they had seventeen millions of pounds lying in their warehouses. Lord North alledged, that the proceedings of the Select Committee, during the recess, had been too slow for the urgency of the case ; and proposed a Secret Committee, consisting of eleven members. This Committee being appointed, went over the commercial and political affairs of the Company with so great dispatch, that after sitting nine days, from November 28th to December 7th, 1772, it procured such information as Lord North professed to think a sufficient ground for very important measures. The first was a bill to restrain the Company for a limited time from sending a commission of supervision to their Presidencies in India. The proposed commission was, by the supporters of the bill, represented as by far too expensive for the involved state of the Company's finances. Burke took a very extensive view of the constitution of the Company, and its actual state. This speech was one of the numberless instances, *paratum accessisse ad causam* ; that he was prepared for the subject in discussion, so prepared as implied not merely special inquiry for a temporary purpose, but general systematic

information. He inferred from their *charters*, that the proposed restraint was an *invasion of their rights*; and from the reports of the committee, that there did not exist a necessity, which alone could justify the proposed invasion. From the quickness with which the reports had been made out, respecting the complicated concerns of so great a company, he contended that it arose not from a full examination of their affairs, but from a previous resolution. To serious reasonings he joined wit and ridicule. Speaking of the two committees, the open and the secret, he said, “ Here is a committee appointed last session, a fair and open committee, which has produced nothing. This was the lawful wife, publicly avowed; but finding her *barren*, the Minister has taken a little snug one, which he calls a Secret Committee, and this bill is her *first-born*. Indeed, from the singular expedition of this extraordinary delivery, I suspect she was pregnant BEFORE *wedlock*.”

At a farther stage of the bill he made another speech, shewing the various proceedings of Parliament respecting the India Company, from its commencement, the consequences of the several acts; and, on this new ground, maintaining the inexpediency of the proposed bill. The subject had before gone through the discussion of the ablest speakers on both sides; but Burke's genius, after the question appeared exhausted, both by others and himself, was

able to give it all the charms of novelty. He again placed the dissimilar speed of the two committees in a very ludicrous view. "One has been so slow, that the Company expects no redress from it; the other so rapid, that the Company know not where it will stop: like the fly of a jack, the one has gone hey-go-mad, the other like the ponderous lead at the other end." In describing ironically, in this speech, the qualifications of a modern good member of parliament, he quotes the following rules for what formerly made a good monk: "*Tria faciunt monachum. Bene loqui de superiore. Legere breviarium taliter qualiter, et sinere res vadere ut vadunt:*" which, applying to a member, he translated so—"Speak well of the Minister; read the lesson he sets you; and let the state take care of itself." Such a quotation, respecting the qualifications of a monk, is not that of a St. Omers papist.

These instances, among numberless others, shew the opinion of Johnson, that Burke did not possess wit, to be erroneous.

The following is part of his peroration on the probable consequences of the influx of Indian wealth if at the disposal of the Crown: "What will become of us, if the Ganges pours in upon us in a new tide of corruption? Should the evil genius of British Liberty so ordain it, I fear this house will be so far from removing the corruption of the East, that it will, itself, be from

the East corrupted. I fear more from the infection of that place than I hope from your virtue. Was it not the sudden plunder of the East that gave the final blow to the freedom of Rome? What reason have we to expect a better fate? I attest, heaven and earth, that in all places, and all times, I HAVE HITHERTO SHOVED BY THE GILDED HAND OF CORRUPTION, and endeavoured to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm this island."

Although the friends of Burke must acknowledge that sometimes the vigour of his fancy and "the torrent of impetuous passion transported him beyond the bounds of reason," his enemies cannot disprove the truth of his assertion, "I HAVE SHOVED BY CORRUPTION." If emolument could have tempted him, can it be doubted that a man of his extraordinary powers might have had the most profitable offices? Can we suppose that the Duke of Grafton and Lord North, both of whom are known to have employed very inferior men as literary and political supporters, would not have given a very high price to purchase the powers of Burke? If he had chosen the opposite cause, his parliamentary and literary talents might have been exercised in courting the favour of the most opulent body in the world: he might have promoted the violent and inflammatory measures of the citizens of London; their plans of a total change in Parliament, and their insolent abusive remon-

strances to the Sovereign: City appointments of the most lucrative kind would have been the sure rewards of sedition and disloyalty, arrayed in all the charms of wit and eloquence.

The steady and powerful friend of rational liberty, Burke was the determined enemy of court corruption and of democratical licentiousness; directing his efforts against the one or the other, as it happened at the time to require resistance. It was his uniform opinion, that eastern riches were producing a most important and hurtful change in the manners and morals of Britain; an opinion that became stronger and stronger, as instances multiplied, and his experience increased.

Although the act respecting India supervisions passed by a considerable majority in parliament, it excited great clamours among many of the proprietors. All parties, indeed, admitted that the Company was involved in pecuniary difficulties; yet many said they were only temporary; and that the restraint, imposed on them by the new act, was merely to promote ministerial purposes. The Ministry, however, proceeded to make many other regulations, as remedies to the alledged disorders of their finances. Burke joined his eloquence to the precision and legal knowledge of Dunning, and the commercial information of Johnstone, in vigorously opposing the principle of the regulations, and many of the details. One law

empowered the Company to export their teas, *duty free*, wherever they could find a market. The avowed object of this resolution was to give relief to the India Company: it was, besides, the intention of Ministry to increase the import revenue from America.

There was this great difference between Lord North and Burke, that Lord North could perceive one class of objects and interests separately, but seldom attended to their relation to other classes of objects and their interests, and the probable effect to the nation in general. Burke thoroughly comprehending the separate interests of different members of the state, grasped the whole in his mind, and considered measures immediately affecting one part, not only in their relation to that one part, but to all the parts and to the whole. Lord North considered the India Company and revenue only: Burke the interests of the whole empire. He perceived that the Americans would see the intention of the drawback on exported tea, would persist in their associations to resist its importation, although lowered in price; because their objection was not to the price but to the principle. He foretold that this new resolution would bring the disputes to a crisis: and that Britain must either entirely abandon the duty or enforce taxation. From this alternative, he predicted that commercial and political evils would

arise, which would altogether overbalance the partial advantage to the revenue and to Indian commerce. Partial and temporary expedients are more adequate to the capacity of the majority of mankind, than great and comprehensive counsels. Lord North's proposition was adopted.

The India Company sent out three ships for Boston, laden with tea.

The Bostonians, on hearing of this cargo and its destination, renewed the associations into which they, in common with other colonies, had entered. The populace tumultuously surrounded the houses of the consignees of the tea, to frighten them from acting. When the ships arrived, a meeting was held by the Bostonians and the inhabitants of the neighbouring towns, at which it was determined that the ships, with their cargoes, should be sent back. Notice of this resolution was given to the Company's agents. Meanwhile, difficulties arose * about sending off ships. A clearance from the Custom-house could not be obtained ; they could not pass a fort that commanded the mouth of the harbour, without the permission of the Governor, which he refused. On this the meeting was dissolved, and there was a general cry of " a mob ! a mob ! " A number of armed men, disguised as Indians, boarded the ships, and threw the cargoes into the sea.

* See Stedman's History of the American War, vol. i. p. 87.

When the news of this outrage was brought to England, it was communicated to Parliament by a message from the King. Two things were alledged by Ministers as necessary to be insisted on:—satisfaction to the India Company for the injury they had sustained, and to the honour of the British nation for the insult it had received. For these purposes a bill was proposed, to shut up the port of Boston, except for stores for his Majesty's service, and the necessaries of life for the inhabitants, until peace and good order should be restored, and satisfaction made to the sufferers.

The bill, in its progress through the House of Commons, met with very able and animated opposition, especially from Mr. Dempster, Governor Johnstone, Colonel Barrè, and, most of all, from Burke.

His speech on this occasion, independent of its reasoning, in relation to the Boston-port bill, may be considered as a history of the disputes between England and the colonies previous to the irreconcilable quarrel. He contended that, if the punishment was for resistance, all the northern provinces were equally repugnant to the authority of parliament: that if the punishment was merited on account of disaffection, all these provinces were equally disaffected: if the punishment was intended merely on account of the outrage, there was no evidence that all the Bostonians were con-

cerned. Why then should they be ALL implicated in the punishment? Time should be allowed for finding out the guilty, instead of hurrying the bill through parliament. The law was inexpedient, as our own trade must suffer, and not only by preclusion from Boston; but that other colonies were equally inimical to the tea duty as Massachuset, and had discontinued, or at least diminished, their trade with Britain. In answer to that part which denied the justice of punishing a whole city for the act of certain inhabitants, Lord North alledged the analogy of the law of England, which ordained that a whole district should indemnify a person robbed within its precincts, because its police, if vigilant and active, might have prevented the crime. He adduced also the case of the city of Edinburgh, the whole inhabitants of which had been fined for the riot of a part, in the case of Porteus.* Burke shewed the diversity of the cases of Boston and Edinburgh.

From his speeches, the following statement of difference was drawn, and transcribed into the periodical publications of the time.

* As some readers may not recollect this case, although very noted, I shall mention it in a few words. A riot having taken place in Edinburgh, in 1736, at the execution of a smuggler, the military were called in. Porteus, their Captain, ordered them to fire before the hour was expired. Some persons were killed. Porteus was tried and condemned for murder, but pardoned. A mob, incensed at this pardon, seized Porteus, and hanged him.

PROCEEDINGS AGAINST

EDINBURGH.

BOSTON.

Begun the 10th of February, 1737, and ended June 21st, having continued four months.

The Provost and Magistrates of Edinburgh, the Judges of Scotland, and many other witnesses, examined at the bar of the House.

Counsel and evidence for the Magistrates and City fully heard at the bar.

Two Members for Edinburgh, forty-five for Scotland, in the Lower House, and sixteen in the Upper.

Charge—an overt act of rebellion, and an atrocious murder; proved on a full hearing, and by competent evidences.

Frequent conferences held between the two Houses, to compare the evidence, &c.

Punishment, a fine of 2000*l*.

Begun the 14th, and ended the 31st of March, 1774, being in all seventeen days.

Witnesses examined by the Privy Council, and their evidence suppressed.

The Agent refused a hearing at the bar.

Not one Member for Boston in either House, nor for all or any part of America, nor even a voice in electing one.

Charge—a riot and trespass; no evidence, and no hearing.

Not one conference.

Punishment—the loss of their port, to the injury of the town, at the lowest rate, 500,000*l*. the restoration of their port, and the use of

their property left at the King's mercy; after they shall have paid for rotten tea the price of sound, to the amount of 30,000*l*.

Proof — Journals of the Lords and Commons, in 1737, against Edinburgh and the Bill.

Proof — Journals of the Lords and Commons, 1774, and the Boston-port Bill.

April 19, 1774, a motion was made by Mr. Rose Fuller, for repealing the tea duty. In support of this proposition, Burke made a speech more celebrated than any he had yet spoken. This speech is generally known by the title of *Burke's Speech on American Taxation*. He deduced the history of the American colonies, and the policy of this country, from their first settlement to the commencement of the present reign. He demonstrated the advantages accruing to this country from the old system of policy, and shewed that the measures of this King's Ministers were a deviation from that system; a deviation injurious both to Britain and the colonies. He divided our policy into four parts, comprehending four periods antecedent to Lord North's administration: first, during former reigns, when *Britain pursued trade and forgot revenue*; when the only restraint imposed on America was the Navigation Act; He winds up a most exact and masterly account of the first period in the following words:

“ All this was done by England, whilst Eng-

land pursued trade, and forgot revenue. You not only acquired commerce, but you actually created the very objects of trade in America; and by that creation you raised the trade of this kingdom at least four fold. America had the compensation of your capital, which made her bear her servitude. She had, except the commercial restraint, every characteristic mark of a free people in all her internal concerns.—She had the image of the British constitution.—She had the substance.—she was taxed by her own representatives. This whole state of commercial servitude and civil liberty, taken together, is certainly not perfect freedom; but, comparing it with the ordinary circumstances of human nature, it was an happy and a liberal condition.”

The second period is that from the first idea of a revenue from America to the Stamp Act. “A new scheme of government was adopted (by court favouritism); a necessity was declared of keeping up no less than twenty new regiments, with twenty colonels capable of seats in the House. Country gentlemen, the great patrons of economy and the great resisters of a standing armed force, would not have voted for so large and expensive an army, if they had been sure it was to be at their cost. But hopes of another kind were held out to them; and in particular I well remember, that Mr. Townshend, in a brilliant harangue on this subject,

dazzled them by playing before their eyes the image of a revenue from America. Here began to dawn the first glimmerings of the new colony system."

He pursues this new plan through Grenville's administration, in the preceding regulations, and the famous Stamp Act. This second period he calls that of begun revenue and begun disturbance. This brings him to the means for allaying the disorders during the Rockingham administration—the third period, which he calls the period of repeal, of the restoration of the ancient system, and of the ancient tranquillity and concord. From the third period he goes on to the Revenue Act of the Grafton administration, which he terms the fourth period; that in which the conciliating policy of the third was abandoned, and the irritating policy of the second was revived.

In viewing the proceedings respecting the colonies during this reign, he was led into an examination of the characters of the several ministers who conducted affairs since America engrossed the attention of government: to shew the influence of those characters in producing their several measures. Perhaps it will be difficult to find in any history more of particular truth and general philosophy, more accurate statement of fact, more profound assignation of cause, than in the chief characters which he draws. There is no sacrifice of truth

to rhetoric, by subtle opposition of qualities, no mosaic contrasts, no introduction of pairs, no studied choice of phrase, or measurement of period ; but, in clear, strong, though simple language, developement of intellectual and moral qualities, as modified by existing situation, proceeding from known causes, and displayed in counsels and actions.

Although his characters are generally known and celebrated, I cannot refrain from inserting those parts of them which led to the measures that he either censures or approves.

FROM THE CHARACTER OF GEORGE GRENVILLE, ESQ.

“ With no small study of the detail, he did not seem to have his view at least equally carried to the whole circuit of affairs. He generally considered his objects in lights that were too detached. With a masculine understanding, a stout resolute heart, he had constant application, undissipated and unwearied. He took public business not as a duty which he was to fulfill, but as a pleasure he was to enjoy. If he was ambitious, it was an ambition of a noble and generous strain. It was to raise himself to a well-earned rank in parliament: not by the low pimping politics of a court, but to win his way to power through the laborious gradations of public service, and to secure to himself a well-earned rank in parliament, by a thorough knowledge of its constitution, and a perfect practice in all its business. If such a man fell into er-

rors, it must be from defects not intrinsic: they must be rather sought in the particular habits of his life, which, though they do not alter the ground-work of a character, tinge it with their own hue. He was bred in a profession:—he was bred to the law, which is, in my opinion, one of the first and noblest of human sciences; a science, that does more to quicken and invigorate the understanding than all the other kinds of learning put together: but it is not apt (except in persons very happily born) to open and liberalize the mind exactly in the same proportion. Passing from that study, he did not go very largely into the world, but plunged into business:—I mean the business of office, and the limited and fixed methods and forms established there. Much knowledge, no doubt, is to be had in that line; and there is no knowledge which is not valuable. But it may be truly said, that men, too much conversant in office, are rarely minds of remarkable enlargement. Their habits of office are apt to give them a turn to think the substance of business not to be much more important than the forms by which it is to be conducted. These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions; and therefore persons, who are nurtured in office, do admirably well as long as things continue in the *common order*; but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters out; when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file af-

fords no *precedent*: then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind and a far more extensive comprehension of things is required, than ever office gave, or office can ever give."

The ingenious and profound Stewart, in his "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind," quotes the latter part of this extract, to illustrate the insufficiency of mere experience, without theory, to qualify a man for new and untried situations in government. "The observations (he remarks) Mr. Burke makes on this subject are expressed with his usual beauty and felicity of language; and are of so general a nature, that, with some trifling alterations, they may be extended to all practical pursuits of life."

Mr. Grenville, Burke afterwards shews, considered revenue too exclusively; and, from his eagerness to improve the finances, laid the foundation of much political evil to Britain.

In the character of Lord Rockingham Mr. Burke discovers very great address, as he had in Mr. Grenville's consummateability. He does not dwell on the talents of his patron, but enters into the detail of his measures, and deduces them from patriotism and independence. He lays the principal stress on the qualities of that noble person's heart, as he was much more eminently distinguished for his integrity and virtuous intentions, than for his parts and knowledge.

The character of the illustrious Chatham is

not altogether so distinctive and complete a picture as that of his friend, Mr. Grenville. Burke draws that great man no farther than he thinks necessary to account for his formation of the Ministry which succeeded Lord Rockingham's ; but he gives a very striking description of the heterogeneous materials of that administration. " The state (he says) was delivered into the hands of Lord Chatham—a great and celebrated name ; a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other globe. It may be truly called

*Clarum et venerabile nomen,
Gentibus, et multum nostræ quod proderat urbi.*

" Sir, the venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind, and, more than all the rest, his fall from power, which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, will not suffer me to censure any part of his conduct. But what I do not presume to censure, I may have leave to lament. FOR A WISE MAN, HE SEEMED to me, at that time, to be GOVERNED TOO MUCH BY GENERAL MAXIMS. I speak with the freedom of history, and, I hope, without offence. One or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general, led him into measures that were greatly mischievous to himself ; and for that reason,

among others, perhaps fatal to his country : measures, the effects of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable. He made an administration, so chequered and speckled ; he put together a piece of joinery, so crossly indented and whimsically dovetailed ; a cabinet so variously inlaid ; such a piece of diversified mosaic ; such a tessellated pavement without cement—here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white—patriots and courtiers ; Kings, friends, and republicans ; Whigs and Tories ; treacherous friends and open enemies ;—that it was indeed a very curious shew, but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards, stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, ‘ Sir, your name ?—Sir you have the advantage of me.—Mr. Such-a-one,—I beg a thousand pardons.’ I venture to say, it did so happen, that persons had a single office divided between them, who had never spoke to each other in their lives ; until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same truckle-bed.”*

The picture of Charles Townshend is just,

* The remark concerning maxims came with peculiar propriety from Burke, of whose wisdom it was a distinguishing characteristic, not to adopt any general principle *implicitly*, but to modify its application according to the diversity of circumstances.

discriminative, animated, and strong. He is drawn a man of great talents ; but from an immoderate passion for fame, rather employing his abilities in supporting measures and principles most in vogue, than in devising or maintaining the wisest and most salutary. “ He worshipped (said Burke) that goddess (Fame) wheresoever she appeared ; but paid his particular devotion to her in her favourite habitation, in her chosen temple,—in the House of Commons. Perhaps there never arose a man in this country of a more pointed and finished wit, and (where his passions were not concerned) of a more refined, exquisite, and penetrating judgment. If he had not so great a stock, as some who flourished formerly, of knowledge long treasured up, he knew, by far better than any man I am acquainted with, how to bring together, within a short time, all that was necessary to establish, to illustrate, and to decorate that side of the question which he supported. He stated his matter skilfully and powerfully. He particularly excelled in the most luminous explanation and display of his subjects. His style of argument was neither trite and vulgar, nor subtle and abstruse. He hit the house between wind and water. Not being troubled with too anxious a zeal for any matter in question, he was never more tedious and more earnest, than the preconceived opinions and present temper of his hearers required, to

whom he was always in perfect unison. He conformed exactly to the temper of the house ; and he seemed to guide, because he was always sure to follow." The effects of such a character, minding the *currency* and not the *weight* of opinions, Burke shews in the inconstancy of Townshend's political conduct. He voted for the Stamp Act while it was popular ; when it became disliked, he voted for the repeal : and when that repeal became unpopular, he voted for raising a revenue from America.

Of the characters, those of Mr. Townshend and Mr. Grenville appear to me the most highly finished. Townshend's distinguished for truth and discrimination ; Grenville's for truth, discrimination, and philosophy.

In speaking of the conduct of the North Ministry, he makes an observation, of which the converse applies to himself : " Never have the servants of the State looked at the whole of your complicated interests in one connected view : they have taken things by bits and scraps, just as they pressed, without any regard to their relations and dependencies : they never had any system, right or wrong ; but only occasionally invented some miserable tale of the day ; in order meanly to sneak out of difficulties, into which they had proudly strutted." Burke himself, on the contrary, took the whole of a subject, and all its parts and dependencies, into consideration. Whenever he was

right, his speeches contained a series of causes and effects, antecedents and consequents: they were chains of massy steel, at once strong and brilliant. Whenever he was wrong, he was systematically wrong; the parts were at least congruous. *Si non sunt vera saltem sunt inter se apta.*

Burke descanted with wonderful eloquence on the inconsistency of Ministry, in proposing, at the same time, addresses and resolutions declaring America in a state of rebellion, and conciliatory bills: acts repealing and coercive; soothing and irritating. "You send out (he said) an angel of peace, but you send out a destroying angel along with him; and what will be the effects of the conflict of these adverse spirits is what I dare not say—whether the lenient measures will cause passion to subside, or the severer increase its fury: all this is in the hands of Providence: yet now, even now, I should confide in the prevailing virtue and efficacious operation of lenity, though working in darkness and in chaos. In the midst of this unnatural and turbid combination, I should hope it might produce order and beauty in the end."

The great mind of Burke most thoroughly despised mere courtiers, or, as he called them, household troops,—the parrots of court notions and court stories. "Sir, this vermin of court reporters, when they are forced into day,

upon one point, are sure to burrow in another ; but they shall have no refuge : I will make them bolt out of all their holes." In the same speech, Burke manifests a feature in his character, long afterwards noticed by his very able opponent, Mr. Mackintosh :—" an abhorrence for abstract politics and a dread of innovation." " I am not (says Burke) going into the distinction of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions ; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They, and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. *Oppose the ancient policy and practice of the empire as a rampart against the speculations of innovators*, and they will stand on a manly and sure ground."

Whether we consider this speech of Burke as a display of the most creative genius, as an explanation of the subject in debate, as a chain of reasoning to prove propositions of the highest importance to the hearers and their constituents, as antecedents from which the consequences he drew actually did proceed, or as affording motives which ought to have induced them to the conduct he recommended, it is one of the ablest orations to be met with in any language. Besides being replete with means

adapted to the main end of conviction, and also of persuasion, were men always persuaded by a striking exhibition of their duty and interest, it has other distinguished excellencies: it displays a most penetrating and profound knowledge of human character and its effects: it abounds also in the soundest principles of morality. Transcendent excellence, logical, political, and philosophical, as this oration contains, embellished, enlivened, and elevated as it is by the most beautiful, animated, and grand imagery, which a POET'S genius could produce, a hypercritical rhetorician might probably discover some violations of the rules of *his* art. The rapidity of Burke's genius frequently produces a mixture of plain and figurative language, and also a confusion of figures, which a slower mind, with an ordinary recollection of common-place precepts, would have avoided. "Thus, (says Burke, after having confuted vague reports circulated by court-hirelings) are blown away the insect-race of courtly falsehoods! Thus perish the miserable *inventions* of the wretched *runners* for a wretched cause, which they have *fly-blown* into every weak and rotten part of the country, in vain hopes that when their maggots had taken wing, their importunate buzzing might sound something like the public voice." A rhetorician might probably tell us that the falsehoods are considered first metaphorically

as insects, again literally as inventions, and immediately afterwards as insects, all in the same sentence. Critics of more intellectual expansion than verbal minuteness might reply, that the figure, whether rhetorically accurate or not, yet produces the intended effect of exciting contempt.

A second bill respecting American affairs was now proposed. From the disorders in Massachusetts's Bay, it was asserted by Ministers that the civil government of that province was inadequate to the remedy of the alledged defects : it was proposed to enact a law to deprive the lower House of Assembly of the privilege of electing the members of the council, and to vest that power in the Crown ; and also to vest in the King or Governor the appointment of magistrates and judges. This bill was vigorously opposed by many members. Burke contended that there was no evidence to justify such a deviation from the constitution of the colonies, and such an accession of power to the Crown. A third act was proposed for empowering the Governor, with advice of council, to send to England, to be tried, any person who, in the support of the revenue laws, or suppression of riots, should be charged with murder. We find no speech of Burke upon this bill. A fourth act was proposed for the government of Canada, to secure to the inhabitants the Roman Catholic religion, to its clergy the tithes, to supersede

trial by jury, to re-establish the French mode in its place, and to appoint a council dependent on the King's pleasure. This bill originated in the House of Lords. In opposing it in the House of Commons, Burke principally gave vent to his humour, in which, though he abounded, it seldom formed the leading characteristic of any of his speeches.

During the recess after this session, Burke received, at Beaconsfield, a visit from his friend Johnson. On viewing Burke's beautiful villa, he exclaimed, in the words of the exiled Mantuan to the restored Virgil,

Non equidem in video miror magis.

Although these two great men had frequently political disputes in town, here there was no altercation. The polite host refrained from subjects of contention. The guest had so much breeding as to abstain from unprovoked attacks, in his own house, on a man of the most engaging hospitality. Mr. and Mrs. Burke exerted themselves to please their illustrious visitor, whom Mr. Burke venerated for kindred genius, and his lady, because so prized by her husband; and so effectually studied his pleasure, that he declared he never passed his time with so much delight and instruction. Indeed, the sole conversation of each other must have been, to those eminent personages, a treat which they seldom experienced. In town they often met, but though generally in company respectable for

talents and knowledge, far inferior to themselves.

Burke's attention to the sage did not prevent him from bestowing every mark of polite attention on his other guests. He, as a landlord, exercised that hospitality which is the result of good sense and good dispositions, polished by an extensive intercourse with the politest society ; dividing his attention to his different guests, and drawing every one of them to converse on the subjects with which he knew them best acquainted. Mrs. Thrale, who might very probably construe the politeness of Burke into an admiration of those talents and acquirements with which she herself and many others believed her to be endowed, declares it was a most delightful party. Burke made his guests pleased with themselves, with each other, and consequently with their entertainer. Although his fulness could not avoid venting itself, yet did he manage his conversation so as not to mortify others by a sense of their inferiority, or overbear them with his powers. They felt they were delighted, and knew they were instructed by the discourse, without being drawn to a humiliating comparison with the speaker. He never brought his strength to a comparative trial, unless provoked by an attack, nor indeed always then.

Mrs. Thrale, who has been more careful in marking the defects of her friend's manners

than the perfections of his understanding, the former being, probably, more within the reach of her observation than the latter, mentions a strange compliment paid by Johnson to Burke at parting. The general election called them all different ways. Mr. Burke being to set out for Bristol, to stand candidate, for which he had been invited by a great majority of the electors—Johnson, taking him by the hand, said, “Farewell, my dear Sir! and remember that I wish you all the success which *ought* to be wished you, which *can possibly* be wished you by an *honest man* ;” words containing an insinuation not very polite to his kind host. Burke took no notice of that mark of his friend’s breeding. Though the high church bigotry of Johnson made him an enemy to the politics of a philosophical Whig, yet he continued uniformly a friend to Burke ; and the praises of Edmund was one of his favourite themes. As he launched out one day at Streatham on his merits, an Irish trader present was so delighted to hear his countryman so praised by one whom he heard to be the wisest man in England, said to the Doctor, “give me leave to tell you something of Mr. Burke.” He began—“Mr. Burke went to see the collieries in a distant province ; and he would go down, Sir, into the bowels of the earth (in a bag), and he would examine every thing : he went in a bag, Sir, and ventured his life for knowledge ; but he took care of his

clothes, that they should not be spoiled, for he went down in a bag." "Well, Sir, (said Johnson, good humoured) if our friend Mund. should die in any of these hazardous exploits, you and I would write his life and panegyric together; and your chapter of it should be entitled thus—" *Burke in a bag.*"

This year Johnson and Burke lost their friend Goldsmith, whom they both loved and regarded; his merits much overbalancing his foibles and defects. Dr. Johnson wrote the Latin epitaph, which is so well known.

The club had now considerably increased its numbers, and received several members destined to act a conspicuous part on the great political stage, whom I shall mention when I come to their performance on that theatre. A party of eleven gentlemen dined one day at Sir Joshua Reynolds's, all, except Sir William Forbes, acquainted with Goldsmith; all men of great respectability, some of them of literary eminence short only of Johnson's, and one equal to the sage. The conversation turned on Johnson's epitaph, and various alterations and corrections were suggested. But the question was who should have the courage to propose them to the author. At last it was resolved that there could be no way so good as that of a *Round Robin*.

Dr. Barnard, now Bishop of Limerick, drew up an address to Johnson on the occasion, which, it was feared by the rest, the Doctor might

think treated the subject with too much levity. Burke then proposed the address as it stands in the Round Robin, and Sir William Forbes officiated as clerk. *

*Round Robin addressed to Samuel Johnson, L.L.D.
drawn up by Edmund Burke.*

“ We, the circumscribers, † having read with great pleasure, an intended Epitaph for the Monument of Dr. Goldsmith ; which, considered abstractly, appears to be, for elegant composition and masterly style, in every respect worthy of the pen of its learned author ; are yet of opinion, that the character of the deceased as a writer, particularly as a poet, is perhaps not delineated with all the exactness which Dr. Johnson is capable of giving it. We therefore, with deference to his superior judgment, humbly request that he would, at least, take the trouble of revising it ; and of making such additions and alterations as he shall think proper, upon a farther perusal. But if we might venture to express our wishes, they would lead us to request that he would write the epitaph

* Boswell's Life of Johnson

† The Robin was written within a circle, formed by the names of Edmund Burke, Thomas Franklin, Anthony Chalmier, G. Colman, Will. Vaskell, Joshua Reynolds, William Forbes, T. Barnard, R. B. Sheridan, P. Metcalfe, E. Gibbon, Joseph Warton.

in English, rather than in Latin: as we think that the memory of so eminent an English writer ought to be perpetuated in the language to which his works are likely to be so lasting an ornament; which we also know to have been the opinion of the late Doctor himself."

Sir Joshua agreed to carry it to Dr. Johnson, who received it with great good humour; and desired Sir Joshua to tell the gentlemen that he would alter the epitaph in any manner they pleased as to the sense of it; *but he would never consent to disgrace the walls of Westminster Abbey with an English epitaph*: and, observing Dr. Warton's name among the circumscribers, said to Sir Joshua, "I wonder that Joe Warton, a scholar by profession, should be such a fool." The epitaph, as first written by Johnson, is engraved on Goldsmith's monument without any alteration.

Mr. Boswell very justly remarks, that "this hasty composition is one of the many instances which evince the extraordinary promptitude of Burke, who, whilst he was equal to the greatest things, can adorn the least; can with equal facility embrace the vast and complicated speculations of politics, or the ingenious topics of literary investigation." This anecdote also shews the veneration some very eminent men, and even Burke himself, entertained for Johnson. Indeed the request is expressed with much more humility than was necessary. They must

be excessive admirers of Johnson, who would think so humble a style due to him from several of the signers ; or that would suppose that any thing short of perfect equality was requisite, even to Samuel Johnson, from Edmund Burke. Such instances of humble address justify the observation of Dr. Robertson to Boswell, respecting the deportment of his intimates to Dr. Johnson: “ You worship and spoil him among you. He is certainly a man of very great powers of conversation, an able philosophical critic, and a masterly moral essayist : but in other respects not beyond other men. He has many weaknesses, and will believe any thing against the Dissenters and for the church of England.” Dr. Robertson probably thought that, as a political writer, Johnson did not display that superiority which he shewed in moral reflections and in criticism.

The genius, wisdom, and learning of Burke did not prevent him from entertaining some opinions totally unfounded. Through life he had certain prepossessions, to which he was warmly attached, and respecting which, though in most of his conversations he was mild and unassuming, he could brook no contradiction. He most strenuously denied the Irish massacre: he said it was all a fiction. Being at one time intimately acquainted with Hume, he used to battle this point with him with great zeal: when pressed hard by the strong testimony and

powerful arguments adduced by Hume, he used to say that the testimony proved nothing ; and to quote an absurd story, to which, he affirmed, thousands of Irish most confidently bore witness, “ that the ghosts of numbers of those that had been killed, and thrown into the Shannon, often made their appearance on the banks of the river, to the great disturbance of the neighbourhood.” This mode of reasoning, that one believed a portion of history was false, because a story obviously false had been believed, was certainly very unworthy of Burke, and very unlikely to convince Hume ; although he himself, when it favours his own prejudices, reasons in the same manner.* I am assured that Hume alludes to Burke in the following note to the 5th volume of the History of England : “ There are three events in our history which may be regarded as *touchstones* of party men. An English Whig, who asserts the reality of the popish plot ; an Irish Catholic, who denies the massacre in 1641 ; and a Scotch Jacobite, who maintains the innocence of Queen Mary ; must be considered as men beyond the reach of argument, and must be left to their own prejudices.”

* In his Essay on Miracles, when he argues, from the many absurd stories of particular miracles told by priests, that miracles in general are incapable of proof from testimony.

So great is the inequality often to be found in men of the highest genius, that Burke could not bear to have this favourite notion attacked. There were three subjects on which he could not speak without being transported into a rage, as violent as Johnson, if Whigs were praised, the Americans defended, or Episcopacy censured :— Burke's were, through life, the Irish massacre ; during the latter part of it, the conduct of Hastings, and the French revolution. He never forgave Hume ; and I am informed that, even so late as the last Christmas, he saw in conversation with a Counsellor of the first talents, he inveighed most bitterly against the historian for having alluded to him in his note.

Burke's speech on *American taxation* was now published, and greatly increased, through the nation, the praise of his wonderful talents. Not those only who coincided in his political sentiments, but the most strenuous abettors of the plans of Administration allowed its uncommon excellency.

The eloquence of Burke has been frequently compared to that of Cicero. There is, no doubt, a general resemblance between two of the most learned men and greatest orators of the most learned and eloquent ages and countries. Both are men of extraordinary genius : both had acquired an uncommon share of the knowledge of their respective times, and especially of the knowledge most necessary for political disqui-

sition and eloquent orations: both are completely informed on the subjects which they undertake to discuss: both reason with great force and dexterity, arguing closely or loosely, directly or circuitously, as best answered their purpose.

We may consider these two great orators, in point of materials, disposition, language, and the purposes to which their respective eloquence was directed. The different circumstances of the times necessarily produced a very considerable difference in the materials of their eloquence. The extent and complication of modern politics required a proportionate comprehension and variety of materials from the British senator, which the more simple relations of ancient politics did not require from the Roman. Besides more multifarious detail, the philosophy of politics is now much farther advanced than in the time of Cicero. There is much more of generalization in politics, as in all subjects. To compose eloquent orations, in the age of Cicero, required neither the same extent and multiplicity of knowledge, nor enlargement of views, as in the age of Burke. On the other hand, it now requires less ability to procure multiplicity of knowledge; because, in fact, there is much more to be attained; and less native vigour of mind to generalize, because habits of generalization are common. Cicero's most distinguished orations were judicial, a species of oratory re-

quiring not so wide a compass of materials as deliberative: even the questions of deliberation among the Romans, who were merely a nation of warriors and conquerors, with little commerce, intrigue, and little variety of relation to foreign states; hardly indeed any other than those which proceeded from command. Their situation afforded less variety of deliberative matter than the Grecian republics, and much less than England.

The principal deliberative oration of Cicero, as far as I can recollect, is that (*pro lege Manilia*) on the expediency of appointing Pompey to succeed Lucullus, with extraordinary powers. This speech turned, first, on the comparative merit of the two generals, as it was easy for the Romans to conquer Mithridates, if they had able commanders, desirous of terminating the war. Secondly, on the personal character of Pompey, as likely to be affected by unlimited authority. The facts ascertaining the merits of the two leaders were not difficult to collect, as they were recent in every one's memory. The character of Pompey was well known; and for Cicero's purposes, the chief object was exaggeration. Cicero certainly gives his materials that order and direction which was most likely to procure the recall of Lucullus and the appointment of Pompey. But on perusing the oration *pro lege Manilia*, and Burke's speech on American taxation, and estimating them by the true criterion of speeches on momentous business,

the quantity of important, particular, and general truth, of information and instruction, which they contain, it appears to me that the stores of Burke's mind, as exhibited in this speech, are greater than those of Cicero. If we take all Cicero's speeches and all Burke's, and compare them in the degree of knowledge and wisdom which they convey, I think few would hesitate to say, that a reader might become more knowing and wiser by Burke's than by Cicero's. Much of this, however, arises from causes not peculiar to Burke, but appertaining to this age and country. The reasoning of Cicero is frequently very acute, and generally very ingenious ; but his arguments not rarely are taken from common-place topics, sources so much recommended by ancient rhetoricians, but reprobated by the moderns. Indeed these common-place ideas were much better calculated to answer the particular purpose of their inventors, the Grecian sophists, to speak plausibly on any subject, than the general purpose of a wise orator, to impress on the hearers important truths, and to prompt them to beneficial conduct. With many excellent arguments, resulting from a close consideration of the subject, Cicero often mixes those that are suggested by the rhetorical precepts in vogue. Burke's reasoning is derived never from common-place topics, but always from the most minute and extensive view of the subject, in all its relations, and scientific

knowledge of the general principles applicable to the questions in discussion, with the modifications arising from the particular circumstances of the case. Mixed with very great intellectual force, there is, in Cicero's argumentative materials, much of that rhetorical art, the knowledge and application of which requires no extraordinary power of understanding.—Burke's argumentative materials derive little aid from rhetorical art. Both shew an understanding *capable of investigating* hidden truths:—Burke had *actually investigated* more than Cicero.

Another species of materials that tends to illustrate truth, and embellish eloquence, is imagery. In imagery, Burke is much more copious and variegated than Cicero. Superior copiousness, however, of imagery does not necessarily imply superior fertility of imagination: the power of combination being equal, he will most easily combine who has the most copious materials. If there be two men of equal powers of imagination, and the one knows history and ethics, the other history and ethics equally well, and physics besides, the latter may have with ease more abundant imagery than the former. The sources of imagery are more numerous to the moderns, because knowledge is greater.—But when we particularly examine the imagery of Cicero and of Burke, we find Burke's to be much more abundant, not only from the stores

of modern discovery and practice, but from those of external and moral nature, known in the time of Cicero, and at all times. Hence we may fairly infer that the imagination of Burke was naturally more fertile than that of Cicero. In the imagery, as well as the arguments of Cicero, an attentive reader will find more of rhetorical art than in Burke's. Cicero deals more in antithesis, climax interrogation,—the productions of study: Burke, in metaphor, personification, apostrophe,—the effusions of genius. Burke not only abounds in serious imagery, but in those combinations which constitute wit: in wit, Cicero seldom succeeds, but frequently descends to puns. Wit, indeed, in general bears a greater proportion to the intellectual exertions of our countrymen than to those of the Romans. In humour, both the orators are very happy, though both are sometimes very coarse. In the pathetic, Cicero's orations abound more frequently than Burke's. Cicero's perorations are highly wrought up, especially in his harangues to the people. Indeed it is to such audiences that pathos is properly used: to informed British gentlemen it would be absurd to speak to their feelings, but through their understandings. When Burke is pathetic, his pathos equals that of Cicero, or any orator.

Both Cicero and Burke abound in the purest morality, though the former frequently, and the latter sometimes, defended men by no means

moral in their conduct. Cicero's speeches were filled with egotism, a defect from which Burke's are exempt: Burke's with ebullitions of rage, which are seldom found in Cicero's.

In the disposition of their materials, both shew great judgment and skill, though Cicero displays more art, and a more regular attention to *rbetorical rules for the conduct of a discourse*. In their exordiums, both have a great degree of insinuation; both tend to prepossess their hearers: but Cicero's introductions are generally more laboured than Burke's. The narrative part of Cicero's orations is no doubt very excellent, clear, concise, yet full; omitting nothing important, and seldom introducing any thing extraneous: they are the well told statements of an able lawyer. Burke's narratives are also extremely clear on the whole, and distinct in their several parts. His subjects generally require a greater compass of narration than Cicero's: they comprehend larger portions of time, more variety of events, and greater intricacy of relations. He excels in detailing particulars, in marking the principal epochs, in classing his subjects according to their respective relations, and in shewing causes and effects. His narratives are the abridged histories of a philosophical historian.

In the management of arguments, Burke may perhaps be esteemed less regular than Cicero: his narrative and argumentative parts

are often blended. Cicero is more methodical, and arranges his arguments in a more connected series, so that the one may support the other. From Cicero's arrangement, a reader may *sooner* comprehend the whole of his reasoning, than from Burke's the whole of his reasoning: and in that particular Cicero is, no doubt, superior to Burke. It may be said, that the hearers of Cicero not being so well informed and enlightened men as those of Burke, the most exact and luminous order was absolutely necessary to convey the arguments with effect to their minds: whereas, Burke's hearers, if the arguments were intrinsically good, could perceive their force, though not arranged with the greatest art, and in the closest connection. It may also be alledged, that Cicero himself is less scrupulously attentive to lucid order, in his speeches against Catiline, and other orations to the senate, than in that for Manilius's bill, and other harangues to the people. But as even the ablest and most learned men, though they can comprehend arguments, independently of their disposition, yet can more quickly comprehend them if connected than detached, Cicero's arrangement is better than Burke's. In some of his principal speeches, Burke's disposition is as regular as that of Cicero.

Language also appears to have occupied a greater proportion of Cicero's attention than of Burke's; his words and phrases are nicely

chosen, his sentences are dexterously turned, his style is harmonious, elegant, and splendid: Burke's language is chiefly eminent for clearness, propriety, copiousness, and force: he does not particularly study musical cadence in the structure of his periods: his style is highly adorned, but his ornaments are the ornaments of genius, not of rhetoric; not of the body, but of the soul of his discourse. On the whole, the mechanism of composition was evidently more studied by Cicero than by Burke. Cicero aims so much at beauty and magnificence, as sometimes to impair his strength: for smoothness and harmony he is not unfrequently indebted to enervation. Very great attention to rhetoric is seldom united with masculine strength and profound philosophy. In the flowing numbers of Isocrates we rarely meet the force of Demosthenes. Perhaps in none of his writings does Cicero shew more the uncommon vigour of his understanding; his complete knowledge of human nature; his intimate acquaintance with the laws and constitution of his country, with its politics during that momentous æra; his comprehension of the general characters and particular views of the celebrated actors during the last scene of the republic, than in his letters: compositions containing the most valuable information, most acute and energetic reasoning, without any of his oratorical pomp of language. They are the plain strong sense

of a most able man, writing upon important business. Cicero was certainly a man not only of the greatest penetration and vigour, but also of very profound philosophy and expanded wisdom. His treatises on the most important subjects of philosophy, on the religious, civil, social, and political relations and duties of man, have little ornament of style: the language is merely perspicuous, precise, and strong. The expression of Cicero's letters and philosophical disquisitions is more the expression of wisdom than that of his orations.

In their speeches, Burke's obvious end is to impress on you his views of the subject: Cicero's not only to impress on you his views of the subject, but strike you with an admiration of the orator. Burke tries to inform, convince, please, and persuade the hearer: Cicero to inform, convince, please, affect, and persuade the hearer; and at the same time to shew him how well the speaker can speak. In many of his speeches, the display of his powers seems to have been his principal object: in his defence of Milo it must have been his sole purpose, because, in fact, it was never spoken.

From the diversity of circumstances, much similarity in materials neither did, nor indeed could, exist between these or any British and Roman orators. In the conduct of their speeches there might have been likeness; but in fact we do not find very much. In his performances of unadorned information and instruction,

Cicero resembles the narratives and ratiocination of Burke, more than in his ornamented eloquence: even in these the likeness is not special. Where conviction is the sole object, they agree in using plain language, as the best adapted for that purpose. Being both men of extraordinary wisdom, they, upon practical subjects, argue as ALL MEN OF TRUE WISDOM ARGUE,—*from experience, and not from metaphysical distinction*. They were both first-rate speakers, according to the circumstances of their respective situations and countries: but their compositions were no more particularly like than those of Hume and Fergusson to those of Tacitus; of Robertson or of Gibbon to Livy's: because the four Britons resembled the two Romans in the general circumstance of being the first historians of their nation. Men of such genius as Cicero and Burke rarely descend to imitation. Johnson being asked if Edmund Burke resembled Tullius Cicero—"No, Sir, he resembles Edmund Burke."

A considerable party of merchants and tradesmen of Bristol, chiefly Dissenters, admiring the eloquence of Burke, and looking upon him, from his political conduct, as strenuously attached to civil and religious liberty, named him a candidate for their city. He was gone to Malton, a Yorkshire borough, under the influence of the Marquis of Rockingham; and was actually chosen, when a deputation ar-

rived to request him to stand for Bristol. With the consent of his new constituents, he complied. There were already three candidates : Lord Clare and Mr. Brickdale, the late members ; and Mr. Cruger, an American merchant. Burke, when he first appeared on the hustings, made a very eloquent and impressive speech, admirably adapted to the hearers. He enlarged upon the immense advantages of commerce, and shewed himself thoroughly acquainted with its branches, objects, and principles, and accurately informed respecting the trade of Bristol. At the conclusion of the poll he displayed still more captivating eloquence. He and Mr. Cruger were elected.

Mr. M'Cormick says, " that notwithstanding his panegyrics on trade, Burke really did not respect the character of a merchant ; and quotes a passage from one of his speeches to shew Burke's opinion : " Do not talk to me (he said) of the liberality and patriotism of a merchant ; his god is his gold ; his country his invoice ; his desk his altar ; his ledger his bible ; his church his exchange ; and he has faith in none but his banker." Mr. M'Cormick thinks that such an opinion of the mercantile profession is incompatible with sincerity in the praises of trade. But, it by no means follows, that a conviction of the utility of an employment must be accompanied with a conviction of the great abilities or great virtue necessary

to exercise that employment. Burke, though he did not, and indeed could not, think either extraordinary talents or extraordinary goodness necessary to form a merchant, thought well of the mercantile character, modified by the circumstances, manners, and sentiments of this country. The tendency of great conversancy with money has so much relation to the abilities and knowledge of the person so conversant, that it would be difficult to make it the subject of a general rule. It certainly increases the natural contraction of narrow understandings ; but often expands great minds : it leads them to form projects of extensive utility, by having the means in their view and power. Commerce, probably, like other objects of thought, has a tendency to expand or contract, according to its mode. In its petty details, it, no doubt, must contract the understanding ; but enlarges it in its general schemes, the result of extensive information, calculation of probabilities, and accurate and acute investigation. We find also that it often liberalizes conduct. In no nation do men apply themselves so readily and powerfully to the assistance and relief of their fellow men, as in the country in which commerce is most prevalent. By no set of men is service better recompensed than by British merchants.

The idea that Burke thought meanly of merchants probably originated from the opinion

he entertained of stock-jobbers, and other gamblers, contractors, Indian depredators, and all those who suddenly amassed great fortunes by fraud and peculation, instead of gradually saving money by industry, œconomy, and skill.

Burke's colleague, Cruger, was, it would appear, a man of no very copious eloquence. It is even reported, that after Burke had delivered one of his best speeches at Bristol, Cruger rose up, and exclaimed, "I say *ditto* to Mr. Burke—I say *ditto* to Mr. Burke."

The new parliament now met, and, probably, no age or country ever shewed a greater assemblage of talents.

On the side of Government, among many men of parts and knowledge, were ranged—Germaine, distinguished for closeness, correctness, and neatness; Jenkinson, for industry, commercial and political information; Dundas, for strong understanding, sticking to the point, and expeditious dispatch of difficult business; Wedderburne, eminent for acuteness, versatility, and ingenuity; Lord North, equally remarkable for pleasing variegated wit, humour, classical taste, and knowledge, as for dexterity of argument and readiness of reply; Thurlow, surpassing all his coadjutors in decision and masculine strength.

On the side of Opposition there was the patriotism and solidity of Dempster and Saville;

the industry and colonial information of Pownall ; the colloquial pleasantry, the vivacity, and classical erudition of Wilkes ; the animated declamation of Barrè, the quick apprehension, commercial and political knowledge of Johnstone ; the constitutional principles, legal precision, readiness, acuteness, and vigour of Dunning : the extensive, accurate, and multifarious knowledge ; the brilliant, variegated, and grand imagery ; the luminous illustration, the rapid invention, the clear, strong, diversified, abundant reasoning ; the comprehensive and expanded philosophy of Burke.

A personage was now rising to the first rank, in the first assembly in the world, who must have held a very exalted situation in any assembly of statesmen and orators that it ever contained—Charles James Fox, the second son of Henry, Lord Holland, born January 24th, 1749. His father soon perceived the superiority of his intellectual powers, and spared no pains on his education. Lord Holland made it a rule, in the tuition of his children, to follow and regulate, but not to restrain nature. At table, Charles, when a boy, was permitted to enter into the conversation of men, and acquitted himself to the astonishment of all present. Perhaps the early habit of thinking with freedom, and speaking with readiness, may have contributed to that *prompt exertion* of his great talents, which makes a considerable part of his

senatorial excellence. His father's indulgence to his favourite Charles sometimes led the youth to petulance. One day, Lady Holland saying something on a subject of Roman history, which Charles perceived to be erroneous, he immediately asked, with much contempt, what she knew about the Romans? and with more knowledge and force of argument, than filial reverence, he demonstrated her error:—nor did his father chide his forwardness. When Lord Holland was Secretary of State, young Charles used to read his dispatches; and when not ten years of age, one day told his father that a paper, which he had just read, was too feeble, and threw it into the fire. The Secretary made out another copy, without the slightest reprimand. Most parents would agree in thinking that the father's indulgence, even to Charles Fox, was excessive. Few, very few, can have an opportunity of ascertaining its effects on SUCH A SUBJECT.

When fourteen years of age, Lord Holland carried Charles to Spa, and allowed him five guineas a night for a Pharo-bank, an allowance which probably generated his propensity to gaming.

At Eton, Charles's literary acquirements were far beyond those of his contemporaries, although several of them were excellent scholars. His attainments were not the effects of habitual application, but of the occasional exercise of

extraordinary powers. He very early discovered a strong bias to pleasure and dissipation; a bias increased by his father, who lavishly supplied him with such sums as invited extravagance.

At Oxford, his talents and learning created admiration, and even astonishment. Although his time seemed devoted to gaming, and every other species of dissipation, he excelled all of his standing in literary acquirements: he was a profound classical scholar: he read Aristotle's Ethics and Politics with an ease uncommon in those who have devoted themselves principally to the study of the Greek writers. His favourite authors were Demosthenes and Homer. *

* He has retained through life his knowledge of the Greek language, and is still particularly conversant with Homer. He can discuss the works of the bard, not only as a man of exquisite taste, and as a philosophical critic, which from such a mind might be expected, but as a grammarian. No professed philologist can more accurately know the phraseology and versification of the poet. One day, a clergyman, eminent for knowledge of the Greek language, was attempting to prove that a verse in one of the books of the Iliad was not genuine, because it contained measures not used by Homer. Mr. Fox instantly recited twenty other verses of the same measure, to shew that deviation from the usual feet did not imply interpolation. He, indeed, could converse with a Longinus, on Homer's beauty, sublimity, and pathetic; with an Aristotle, on his exhibitions of man; and with a pedagogue, on his dialects, his dactyls, spondees, and anapaests. Such is the rapidity with which Fox darts into a subject, that he can meet men of the greatest knowledge, on at least equal terms, on their peculiar studies.

History, ethics, and politics, were his favourite studies; and he seems early to have considered himself as destined to be a senator and a statesman. He staid but a short time at Oxford, made the tour of Europe; and though he plunged into every excess into which the pleasurable regions of the south allure Britons in the hey-day of youth, he acquired an extensive and profound knowledge of the constitution, laws, government, nature, arts, and manners of the several countries which he visited.

In the twentieth year of his age he procured a seat in parliament; and, young as he was, distinguished himself among the many eminent men then in the House of Commons. At first he took the side of Administration, and was thought one of its ablest supporters; in so much, that he attracted the notice of Junius, who saw the *bloom* of talents destined to ripen into the most exquisite and valuable fruit. The facility with which he made himself master of a new question, and comprehended the strength, weakness, and tendency of a proposition or measure; his forcible argumentation, his readiness of the most appropriate, significant, and energetic language, soon rendered him conspicuous: his daily and obvious improvement shewed that his talents had not then nearly reached the pinnacle at which they were to arrive.

Mr. Fox's parliamentary exertions, from

their commencement till his abandonment of Lord North, may be considered as the *first* EPOCH of his oratorial and political history. We see in him vast capacity ; but hitherto more capacity than fulness. We observe strong pointed reasoning ; but not that variety and abundance of profound observations and just conclusions which the same mind, embracing more extensive and manifold knowledge, afterwards exhibited. He himself has declared, that he learned more from Mr. Burke than from all others. Even, if he had not made that declaration, it would be very probable that he derived great benefit from intercourse with such a man as Burke ; that the power of rapid acquirement would be successfully exerted, when there was within its reach such a multiplicity of the most valuable stores. It is evident that, from the beginning of his connection with Burke, his speeches, in a very short time, displayed much greater copiousness of matter and enlargement of political views.

Fox's parliamentary efforts, during the American war, formed a *second* EPOCH in his oratorial and political history, when first-rate powers had abundant materials.

Mr. Fox had first been a Lord of the Admiralty ; afterwards a Lord of the Treasury : but, opposing Government, in 1774, was dismissed. He had, some time before, begun to associate with several members of Opposition ;

and had been, by the sympathy of genius, attracted to Burke. Lord North had repeatedly represented to him the suspicions to which his association with opposers of Government gave rise. "If (he said) we see a woman frequently coming out of a bagnio; we cannot swear she is not virtuous; yet we should judge of her from her company." Finding that, notwithstanding his expostulations, Charles still associated with the same gentlemen, Lord North procured his dismissal, very abruptly, from office. Fox, although in his disposition candid, liberal, and of the most expanded benevolence, yet, in his temper, feeling and irritable, was filled with resentment at the mode of his dismissal, which he imputed to Lord North; and from that time became a most strenuous and formidable opponent of the Minister. One of the principal features in Fox's character is openness. In every part of his political conduct, and, indeed, of his private, boldness and decision have been prominent. Whether the ends which he pursued were useful or hurtful, there was no artifice, no petty intrigue, no duplicity in the means: whether all was *fair* or not, at least, all was *above board*. Such a character was totally unfit for the tricks and suppleness of a mere courtier. The greatness of his mind was as incompatible with the frivolity of court etiquette, as his openness with the duplicity of court artifice.

The proceedings respecting America opened a wide field of opposition. Although Fox attacked the measures of Administration in general, yet the principal butt of his eloquence was the NOBLE LORD IN THE BLUE RIBBON.

Fox, perfectly master of every kind and mode of argument, true and sophistical, close and loose, modelled his reasonings according to those of his principal opponent. Lord North, though a very ready, and, indeed, an able reasoner, was by no means close. His arguments, though generally sufficiently logical, had not mathematical gradation and connection. He did not keep one object before him, and move directly towards it, without deviating to the right or left. He was diffuse and expatiatory. Fox, like one of those great generals who could readily adopt the tactics best fitted for those of an opposing general, in his speeches against Lord North expatiated into a very wide field. The closeness of a future opponent has since lessened his expatiation, and by contracting its direction, strengthened his eloquence, as I shall afterwards have occasion to mention. Fox, during the American war, was a more informed and more energetic speaker than before ; and now is a more informed, more compacted, more energetic speaker than during his political campaigns against Lord North.

Among many extraordinary excellencies in the eloquence of Fox is his power of simplifica-

tion. However intricate or complicated a subject may be, he unravels and unfolds it so perfectly as to make it intelligible to the most ordinary hearer. He strips Truth of every dress, that, from either artifice or negligence, might conceal her real form ; and displays her naked nerves and sinews. Like Demosthenes, the excellence of his speeches consists in essentials ; in clearly stating important facts, in adducing and impressing forcible arguments. His orations are addressed almost exclusively to the understanding. In imagery he frequently deals ; but his are the images of illustration more than of embellishment. Like Demosthenes, he can call in humour and wit ; but they are called in as auxiliaries, and not suffered to act as principals. So extensive and variegated is his knowledge, that he overcomes professional men, not only in the principles, (for that, in such a man as Fox, would not be surprising) but in the technical details of their peculiar knowledge. His arrangement is evidently not studied ; thoughts rise so rapidly in his mind that it would be impossible for him to adhere to any preconceived order. His disposition is, however, the result of a mind that is comprehensive, as well as rapid and energetic : it is sufficiently luminous to convey to his hearers the different parts and relations of the most complicated subjects. His style is that which a powerful understanding, and a thorough

knowledge of the language, without any affectation, produces. He courts neither elegance nor harmony ; but is not deficient in those secondary qualities. The primary qualities of language, clearness, force, and appropriation, characterize his speeches. Without rhetorical flourishes and gaudy ornaments, his language is merely a vehicle of feeling and thought.

American affairs occupied the principal attention of Ministry and Opposition during the session of 1774. In all the colonies the landing of the tea had been resisted ; so that all shared in the criminality for which the port of Boston had been blocked. The Bostonians, on hearing of the resolutions of the British parliament, were at first alarmed ; but on finding that their neighbours were resolved to support them, became more firm and determined in their opposition to the mother country. The assembly of Virginia set the example of making the cause of Boston a common cause of the colonies. They represented the parliamentary measures as in truth an attack on all the colonies, and as of a tendency destructive to the rights and liberties of all, unless effectually resisted. To inflame the minds of the people, they appointed the first of June, the day on which the bill was to commence, as a day of fast and humiliation, “ to implore the divine interposition to avert the heavy calamity which threatened destruction to their civil rights, with the evils of

civil war, and to give one heart and mind to the people, firmly to oppose every injury to the American rights." The other colonies coinciding in sentiment, and adopting the measures of Massachusetts and Virginia, committees of correspondence were established between the several provinces, and a plan was proposed for holding a general congress to deliberate on such measures as the common interest of America might require.

The congress was held at Philadelphia, consisting of delegates chosen from all the other colonies, except Georgia. Although the colonies were not all equally violent in every particular, they all agreed in condemning the Boston-port bill, the consequent laws respecting Massachusetts's Bay, and in denying the right of Britain to tax the colonies. They published a declaration on the state of the affairs in Massachusetts, declaring their approbation of the conduct of the Bostonians, recommending perseverance in the plan of conduct they had hitherto pursued, and contributions to compensate for the evils they had already suffered from their spirit of resistance. They published also a petition to the King, an address to the People of Great Britain, and an address to the Colonies, all breathing the same spirit of repugnance to the authority of parliament; also a declaration of rights and grievances, claiming, as a most

important privilege, the exclusive power of legislating for themselves in all cases whatsoever.

These were the resolutions made public; but it appeared, from the measures adopted in the several colonies, after the breaking up of the congress, that hostilities were already proposed. Arms and warlike stores were openly provided, and resistance to the mother country, by open force, became the subject of common conversation. The Americans also entered into an association to suffer no trade, import or export, with Britain, or any of her possessions, until the obnoxious laws should be repealed, and the right of taxation renounced. Such were the consequences of the Boston-port bill, and the subsequent measures of the British legislature; consequences very different from the expectations of the Ministry, but fulfilling the predictions of Burke.

While these things were going on in America, great apprehensions were entertained in Britain, by merchants trading to the colonies, of the effects which the disputes would produce to commerce. Petitions were laid before parliament by several bodies of traders, representing the great losses they had already sustained from the suspension of traffic with America, the immense sums that were owing them from that quarter, and the ruin that must accrue to

them, unless intercourse should be again opened with the colonies.

Among the trading and manufacturing towns which had been affected by the American disputes, Birmingham was one of those which felt them most severely, and had most anxiously petitioned the House to take their case into consideration. The petition was ably supported by Mr. Burke, but unsuccessfully. The petitioners expressed their gratitude in the following letter:

TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ.

SIR,

Birmingham, Feb. 8, 1775:

"The merchants and manufacturers having a principal share in the American trade from this town and neighbourhood, beg your acceptance, through our hands, of their warmest acknowledgements for your liberal support of our petition to the Honourable House of Commons, wherein are stated the evils we already feel, and the greater we have yet to apprehend, from a continued stagnation of so important a branch of our commerce as that with North America.

*"At the same time we also unite in expressing our particular thanks for the motion * you was pleased*

* From Birmingham a petition, agreeable to the views of Ministry, had been presented to the House. Burke moved an inquiry might be made concerning the two petitions, to ascertain which spoke the sense of the people.

to make for an enquiry into the manner of both the late petitions from the town of Birmingham having been obtained ; an enquiry which scarcely could have failed to give some useful intelligence, and to have fully justified our application to parliament at so critical a juncture.

“ We cannot wonder, Sir, that defamation should have made its appearance on such an occasion as this, which is the notorious evidence of a weak cause, and whose mischiefs, we are persuaded, will be as transient as its efforts were intemperate. We only take the liberty, therefore, of adding our sincere wishes, that you may fill your distinguished place in the British senate, and that your persevering endeavours to preserve the rights of the subject, to maintain the prosperity of our commerce, and to secure the tranquility of this extensive empire, may meet with a success adequate to the patriotic zeal with which they are animated. Being, with the greatest regard,

Sir,

Your most obliged,

And obedient Servants,

S FRITH,	T. WILKINSON,	T. MARTIN,
J. KETTLE,	J. RICHARDS,	G. RUSSEL,
T. TWIGG,	J. SMITH,	J. WELCH,
W. RUSSEL,	W. WELCH,	T. BINGHAM,
R. RABNER,	J. RICHARDS,	J. WATFORD.”

To the petitions the Minister and his friends paid no great attention ; determined to persist in the plan of taxing America, they disregarded

every consideration adduced to shew its impolicy.

An address was voted to his Majesty, declaring America to be in a state of rebellion. It was followed by several resolutions, declaratory of a determination to coerce. Burke made a stand at every post, with his able phalanx; but was overpowered by numbers. The petitions of the various bodies of merchants were referred to a committee, which Burke called a committee of oblivion. A petition was presented by the American agents, the chief of whom was the great Franklin, from the American Congress to the King, and referred by his Majesty to the House. Franklin and his brother agents requested to be heard in support of the petition. Burke exerted his eloquence to procure them a hearing, but in vain.

While the Ministry were pursuing every measure that could tend to alienate the colonies, they professed to wish for conciliation. Lord North moved, that when any of the colonies should offer, according to their abilities, to raise, under the authority of its assembly, the due proportion for the common defence, and for the support of civil government, parliament should forbear taxing that province. The object of this proposition was evidently to detach some of the provinces from the combination:—it was a half measure, an attempt to compromise the difference, when it was plain, from the

very beginning, that there was no medium between coercion and abandonment. If the Ministry were before right, they conceded by far too much; if wrong, too little. This fluctuation of counsels, this mixture of soothing and irritating measures, had uniformly marked the administration of Lord North, and as uniformly been unsuccessful. Burke's comprehensive wisdom objected to the present resolution as insufficient, and his sagacity foresaw that it would be ineffectual. The event justified his predictions: the Congress rejected the proposition as only a proffered suspension of the mode, not a renunciation of the right, of levying taxes.

That venerable statesman, who, in the vigour of his age, had carried the glory of his country to a height unknown in the annals of British history, now, in the decline of life, and oppressed with distemper, made an effort to prevent a war between the parent state and her colonies. The piercing eye of Chatham saw the danger, with all the probable circumstances which would accompany it, and the consequences that would follow: in dissensions with America he perceived the seeds of foreign war. "France and Spain," he said, "are watching your conduct, and waiting for the maturity of your errors."—To ward off such evils, the wise patriot proposed to cut up the root from which they were likely to spring, and to conciliate America, by placing her on exactly the same footing on

which she had stood before the introduction of the new system.

He supported his motion by a force of reasoning and eloquence not unworthy of the days of his own greatest energy. His attempt was unavailing : his motion was rejected by a great majority.

Burke was, meanwhile, employed in making the most minute and extensive inquiries into the physical and moral state of America, from all those who, from situation and ability, were qualified to give him the most complete information and justest views. He had been some years before appointed agent for New York, and maintained a close intercourse with many of the colonists, and also with the American agents in London, especially with Dr. Franklin. From all that he could learn or judge, he formed the conclusion, that an attempt to subjugate the colonies would be impracticable : conciliation, therefore, he still persisted to recommend.

March 22, 1775, he laid before the House thirteen resolutions for reconciliation. Waving the discussion of right, he confined himself to expediency. He proceeded upon a principle admitted by the wisest legislators, that government must be adapted to the nature and situation of the people for whose benefit it is exercised. Instead of recurring to abstract ideas of the rights of man, he considered the circum-

stances, modes of thinking, dispositions, and principles of action of those men in particular, the treatment of whom was the subject of deliberation.

He proposed that the Americans should tax themselves by their own representatives, in their own assemblies, agreeably to the former usage, and to the analogy of the British constitution ; and that all acts imposing duties should be repealed. “ Peace,” he observes, “ implies reconciliation ; and where there has been a mutual dispute, reconciliation always implies concession on some side.” He considers first *whether Britain ought to concede* ; and after establishing, by the strongest arguments, the wisdom of concession, he next proceeds to inquire *what concession she ought to make*. On the first question, guided by the rule of legislative policy that I have above stated, he takes one of those wide ranges in which his expansive understanding so much excelled. As, in the speech on American taxation, he had presented a complete history of the policy of this country respecting the colonies ; in this he considers the internal state of America, physical, moral, religious, and political. His reasoning for conciliation, even at the expence of concession, is taken from two great sources,—the advantages which had accrued, and would continue to accrue, to this country from their rapidly increasing prosperity, if we were on amicable terms :

and, from their power of resistance, if we should attempt force, he surveys the population of the colonies, their agriculture, and commerce.

Here he shews the amazing versatility of his powers, and the industry with which he mastered the most minute and intricate details. To display the great increase of the commerce of America, he gave *a comparative statement of the export trade to the colonies in 1704 and in 1772; and a comparative statement of the export trade to the colonies in 1772, and to the whole world in 1704*: demonstrating, from acknowledged vouchers, that the trade to America in 1772 amounted to 6,024,171 *l.* and in 1704 to 569,930 *l.* and consequently had risen in the proportion of eleven to one. He also shews that the trade to the colonies in 1772 was in the proportion of twelve to thirteen of the trade to the whole world in 1704, which was 6,509,000 *l.* This detail he applies to prove the vast commercial importance of the colonies to Britain.

The increase was so rapid, that sagacity would not have anticipated it as probable, in the usual course of events. "It happened within sixty-eighty years, within the period of the life of man; in the remembrance of men still alive, and who in 1704 were of sufficient age to be acquainted with the commerce of their country." These could hardly have believed it possible, that in their life time the trade of Britain with

America should come to equal that which there was, then, with the whole world. Here his imagination soared to a very grand poetical vision. "My Lord Bathurst * might remember all the stages of the progress. He was in 1704 of an age, at least, to be made to comprehend such things. He was then old enough, *acta parentum jam legere, et quæ sit, poterit cognoscere virtus*. Suppose, Sir, that the Angel of this auspicious youth, foreseeing the many virtues, which made him one of the most amiable as he is one of the most fortunate men of his age, had opened to him in vision, that, when, in the fourth generation, the third Prince of the house of Brunswick had sat twelve years on the throne of that nation, which (by the happy issue of moderate and healing counsels) was to be made Great Britain, he should see his son, Lord Chancellor of England, turn back the current of hereditary dignity to its fountain, and raise him to an higher rank of peerage, whilst he enriched the family with a new one.

* That enlightened, benevolent, and engaging man was then above ninety. His health was so firm and vigorous, that he used to sit up to enjoy the pleasures of social conversation for several hours after his son. The Lord Chancellor's more delicate temperament obliged him to go to bed. After Lord Apsley's departure for the night, the venerable peer used to call for the other bottle, and say, "come, my friends, let us young men drink to the repose of the old gentleman that has left us,"

If, amidst these bright and happy scenes of domestic honour and prosperity, that Angel should have drawn up the curtain, and unfolded the rising glories of his country, and whilst he was gazing with admiration on the then commercial grandeur of England, the Genius should point out to him a little speck, scarce visible in the mass of the national interest, a small seminal principle rather than a formed body, and should tell him—Young man, there is America, which at this day serves for little more than to amuse you with stories of savage men and uncouth manners; yet shall, before you taste of death, shew itself equal to the whole of that commerce which now attracts the envy of the world. Whatever England has been growing to by a progressive increase of improvement, brought in by varieties of people, by succession of civilizing settlements, in a series of seventeen hundred years, you shall see as much added to her by America in the course of a single life!—If this state of his had been foretold to him, would it not require all the sanguine credulity of youth, and all the fervid glow of enthusiasm, to make him believe it? Fortunate man, he has lived to see it! Fortunate indeed, if he lives to see nothing that shall vary the prospect, and cloud the setting of this day!" He proceeds to the agriculture and fisheries of the colonies, details their flourishing state, draws a general conclusion of the value

of America ; and argues that force is by no means an effectual mode of securing to Britain so valuable a possession.

He next enters into the character of the Americans, their spirit of liberty ; arising, first, from descent :—“ The people of the colonies are *descended of Englishmen*. England, Sir, is a nation which, I hope, still respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The colonists emigrated from you when this part of their character was predominant ; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas and on English principles.” From thence, he says, the Americans inferred, that they must possess the power of granting their own money. “ From England the colonies draw, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles.” In the opinion which they, as the descendants of free Englishmen, entertain, they were confirmed by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies allowed by Britain. “ Their governments were in the highest degree popular.”

He proceeds to shew the influence of their religion (that is, among the northern colonies, where the inhabitants were principally protestant dissenters) in nourishing the spirit of liberty. “ If (he says) any thing were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it the

complete effect : religion, always a principle of energy in this new people, is no way worn out or impaired ; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are protestants ; and of that kind, which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness, in the dissenting churches, from all that looks like absolute government, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets, as in their history. Every one knows, that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails ; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them, and received great favour, and every kind of support, from authority. The church of England, too, was formed, from her cradle, under the nursing care of regular government. But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world, and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very existence depended on the powerful and unremitting assertion of that claim. All protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our northern colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance ; it is the diffidence of dissent, and the protestantism of the

protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations, agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the northern provinces. The colonists left England when this spirit was high ; and in the emigrants highest of all." The manners of the southern provinces, he contends, have the same effect with the religion of the northern. Here he makes a very ingenious and profound observation ; that in whatever country, of which the bulk of the people is free, and yet there are many slaves, domestic or predial, the spirit of liberty is more high and haughty, than in those countries in which there are no human beings in that state of degradation. This remark is justified by the history of Greece and Rome. In all the provinces, he shews that the mode of education, and the remoteness from enslaved nations, increases their love of freedom.

The spirit of liberty being, from a multiplicity of causes, some physical, and most of them moral, very strong, he argued, that it must be treated in one of three ways : it must either be changed, as inconvenient, by removing its causes ; prosecuted, as criminal ; or, thirdly, be complied with, as necessary. One means proposed by the friends of government for repressing the power of America, was to withhold future grants of land, and so check population. The futility of this project he demonstrated :

the people, he said, had already occupied much land without grants, and even if Britain had force to drive them from some parts, they would occupy others: "they would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars, and, pouring down on your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your governors and counsellors, your collectors and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and, in no long time, must be, the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence—"Increase and multiply." Such would be the happy result of an endeavour to keep, as a lair of wild beasts, that earth which God, by an express charter, has given to the children of men. To impoverish the colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would not be so impracticable." "But (he says) we have colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems preposterous to make them unserviceable, in order to keep them obedient." He contends that the temper and character of the colonies are unalterable by any human art. "But let us (he proceeds) suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which

weaken authority by distance will continue. "Ye Gods, annihilate but space and time, and make two lovers happy!" was a pious and passionate prayer; but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians."

The second mode of breaking the stubborn spirit of the Americans, by prosecuting it as criminal, he exposes as impossible in the execution, and consequently absurd in the attempt. "I (he says) do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people." He went on to other effects which might be expected from perseverance in an endeavour which the colonies would resist. From a contest with America he predicted that there would ensue a rupture with European powers, and a general war. After adducing every argument that genius, informed by knowledge, and guided by wisdom, could invent to incline Britain to conciliation, even at the expence of concession, he proceeds to consider what this country ought to concede. His general principle is, that to conciliate, we should rescind all the acts which had tended to alienate America. He illustrates, by a very accurate narrative, the operation of the several laws, and examines the arguments by which they had been supported in parliament; shews the futility of the reasoning and the contrariety of the effects to its anticipations. Wisdom is sim-

ple in her process, she judges of the future from the past. The sum of Burke's reasoning, from his complete history, is this: "By your old mode of treating the colonies, they were well affected to you, and you derived from them immense and rapidly increasing advantage: by your new mode they are ill affected to you; you have obstructed and prevented the emolument. I recommend to you to return from the measures by which you now lose, to those by which you formerly gained."

"I do not examine, whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are intitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power? These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point is the *great Serbonian bog, betwixt Damietta and Mount Casius old, where armies whole have sunk*. I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me

is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable ; but whether it is not your interest to make them happy ? It is not, what a lawyer tells me, I *may* do ; but what humanity, reason, and justice, tell me, I ought to do."

In many of Burke's speeches imagination occupies a great share ; passion in not a few. This is the speech of calm wisdom, drawing from the most extensive information the most salutary conclusions, and recommending the most beneficial conduct. From the speech on American taxation, combined with this, a reader may derive more acquaintance with the history and impolicy of our contest with America, than from any other publication ; he will see the facts and the reasonings in close connection, so as to form one great chain.

This oration, that on taxing America, and indeed every production of Burke, shew the absurdity of the opinion of the author of the Memoirs, that Burke seldom spoke to the understanding. His discourses and writings convey more of united information and instruction than are to be found in those of any orator or statesman whose speeches have been published. There are, no doubt, orators whose orations are directed as closely to the point at issue ; but where are there any which exhibit such a multiplicity of knowledge, and so profound acquaintance with human nature,

intellectual, moral, religious, social, civil, and political? From what senator's speeches can there be formed such a system of wise and practical ethics as may be deduced from his? I may be wrong in this opinion; but until it be proved that there have been or are speeches containing equally extensive and multiform knowledge; equally profound philosophy; equally momentous and beneficial instruction, I am justified in concluding myself to be in the right. I have perused the orations of Cicero, of Demosthenes, of Fox, of both the Pitts, Mansfield, and other eminent orators; and though I think that each of them is equal to Burke in several constituents of eloquence, yet none of them, extraordinary as each of them is for genius and oratorical powers, communicate to the reader and hearer so great a quantity of new and important, particular and general truths.

From the terms in which Burke speaks of the principles of the dissenters and the American spirit of liberty, it has been asserted that he was more favourable to dissenters than to the church, and had conceived republican ideas of freedom. This opinion (if it be really an opinion, and not merely pretended to be so, in order to charge him with inconsistency) is maintained on passages taken from this speech more than on any other grounds. But if we impartially examine what he says of both the

spirit of religion and liberty among the Americans, we find that he does not PRAISE either; he only states their existence, and describes their effects. They were very powerful moral causes of the repugnance of the Americans to submit to British legislation. It is on that account that he shews their nature and operation. He does not represent them as objects of approbation, but as motives to a certain conduct. He does not say the principles of the dissenters are better than those of the church, or the republican spirit of American freedom is more agreeable to the rights of man than the more moderate spirit of English freedom: he says the dissenters of America are inspired with a strong spirit of liberty, which, with other causes, render them unyielding to British authority. The difficulty of coercing men so inspired is great, and, with their physical advantages, probably unsurmountable; or if surmountable, with an expence and loss beyond the value of the object: the attempt, therefore, is unwise; and instead of it he proposes conciliation.

Happy had it been for this nation, happy for mankind, if his opinions, doctrines, and plans had been reduced to practice! His propositions were negatived by a great majority: *pauci ac ferme optimus Hannoni assenserunt; sed ut plerumque fit, optimos plurimi vicerunt.*

Mrs. Piozzi, in her Anecdotes of Johnson, tells us, that when she ventured, even before

the Doctor himself, to applaud with rapture the passage in the speech concerning Lord Bathurst and the Angel, the Doctor said, had I been in the house, I would have answered it thus :

“ Suppose, Mr. Speaker, that to Wharton, or to Marlborough, or to any of the eminent Whigs of the last age, the devil had, not with any great impropriety, consented to appear, he would perhaps in somewhat like these words have commenced the conversation :

“ You seem, my Lord, to be concerned at the judicious apprehension, that while you are sapping the foundations of royalty at home, and propagating here the dangerous doctrine of resistance, the distance of America may secure its inhabitants from your arts, though active : but I will unfold to you the gay prospects of futurity. This people, now so innocent and harmless, shall draw the sword against their mother country, and bathe its point in the blood of their benefactors. This people, now contented with a little, shall then refuse to spare what they themselves confess they could not miss ; and these men, now so honest and so grateful, shall, in return for peace and for protection, fee their vile agents in the house of parliament, there to sow the seeds of sedition, and propagate confusion, perplexity, and pain.— Be not dispirited, then, at the contemplation of their present happy state. I promise you that

anarchy, poverty, and death shall be my care, be carried even across the spacious Atlantic; and settle in America itself, the sure consequences of our beloved whiggism."

If this parody be correctly transcribed by Mrs. Piozzi, I cannot help thinking it inferior to the usual productions of the sage. It is also less able than the passage it is intended to ridicule. Burke's Angel, the advocate of whiggism, by holding forth the amazing increase of prosperity, that was to follow its predominancy, describes what was to take place under that free government which good spirits approve. Johnson's devil is a Tory in his heart. The devil calls the doctrine of resistance dangerous; terms opposition to acts, which Whigs thought oppressive, sedition; and the defenders of the oppressed the vile agents of sedition. Though the devil, therefore, professes to love whiggism, he speaks the language of a Tory.—The devil is also out in point of history. The principles of liberty, which *Satan calls dangerous*, existed in America long before the time of Wharton and Marlborough. Johnson was so bigotted a Tory, that he makes even the devil himself the reviler of whiggism.

About this time Dr. Johnson published his pamphlet, entitled "Taxation no Tyranny," which may be in many respects considered as an answer to Burke's celebrated speech on taxing America. The high church bigotry, which

frequently sent a cloud over the bright mind of the illustrious sage, prevented his political essays from having that superlative excellence which marks his criticisms and ethics. His views on subjects of government are partial, and want that enlarged comprehensiveness which distinguishes his other writings. The usual perspicacity of his mind seems dimmed by the prejudices of education. His reasoning not only wants his general expansion, but his general acuteness and precision. Indeed, wherever politics interfered, his estimates of truth, conduct, and character, appear erroneous—What but the perversion of prejudice could abominate William, the deliverer of this country, regard the contemptible weakness of the priest-ridden James, or praise the abandoned, unprincipled profligate, his brother?—a prince, who evidently considered subjects in no other light, than as men whose industry and property were to be lavished in affording him the means of gross debauchery.

This pamphlet of Johnson partook of the prejudice which could ascribe great merit to Charles II. He sets out with assuming a position as an axiom, which is not only not self-evident, but not true, taken absolutely; true only with certain modifications:—*That the supreme power of every community has the right of requiring from all its subjects such contributions as are necessary to the public safety or public prosperity.*—

By the British constitution, the supreme power of the community has not the right of levying contributions from its subjects, *as subjects*, but as members of an established society, delegating to individuals, chosen by themselves, the power of levying contributions. The agent assesses for the general interest, by permission of the employer ; the employer acquiesces, when he finds that general interest to be the object, and marks his judgment of the exercise of the delegated power by the continuance or discontinuance of the agent, when the specified term of the trust is expired. By the British constitution, consent of the taxee, immediate or mediate, is necessary to constitute a legitimate tax. Johnson considers Britain and America as sovereign and subject, not as different members of a free state, held together by and for mutual interest ; and as members of a free state, suffering partial restraint for general good,—for their own good, and not the good of others exclusive of theirs. In order to ridicule the resistance of America, Johnson supposes Cornwall to resolve to separate itself from the rest of England, and to refuse to submit to an English parliament; holding a congress at Truro, and publishing resolutions similar to those of the Americans. “ Would not such a declaration appear to come from madmen ? ” The cases are not analogous: Cornwall is fully represented in parliament, consequently could not have

that reason for resisting our legislature. If we were to suppose parliament absurd and wicked enough to make laws depriving Cornwall of the most valuable privileges of Britons, without any demerit, the Cornishmen would have a right to resist that act, because oppressive, unconstitutional, and unjust. As to the expediency of exerting the right of resistance, the case would be very different between Cornwall and America ; Cornwall being both much weaker and much nearer than the colonies. It is impossible that the wisdom of Johnson could have meant this pretended analogy for reasoning men. It might pass with mere *courtiers*, but would not convince *statesmen*, even though prepossessed in favour of the cause. Its flimsiness a Dundas, a North, a Thurlow, a Wedderburne, and a Mansfield, would perceive as clearly as a Shelburne, a Camden, a Chatham, a Fox, or a Burke. Johnson considered the subjugation of America, if it persevered in resistance, as certain ; not reflecting on the energetic spirit which inspires men fighting for what either is, or they think, liberty. His predictions respecting the Americans proved false.

In his political writings we find too much adherence to generalities, to be practicably beneficial. With the most powerful mind, habituated to abstraction, he reasons on politics more as an able schoolman than as an able statesman. Burke, with an equally strong under-

standing, as much accustomed to generalization, in reasoning on conduct enters into a much more particular consideration of the actual cases, in all their circumstances.

In a conversation between Johnson and others, Burke delivered his opinion on the effects of parliamentary eloquence. Sir Joshua Reynolds said, " Mr. Burke, I do not mean to flatter, but when posterity reads one of your speeches in parliament, it will be difficult to believe that you took so much pains, knowing with certainty that it could produce no effect, that not one vote would be gained by it." " Waving (replied Burke) your compliment to me, I shall say in general, that it is very well worth while for a man to speak well in parliament. One who has vanity speaks to display his talents; and if a man speaks well, he gradually establishes a certain reputation and consequence in the general opinion, which sooner or later will have its political reward. Besides, though not one vote be gained, a good speech has its effect. Though an act which has been ably opposed passes into a law, yet, in its progress, it is modelled, it is softened in such a manner, that we plainly see the Minister has been told that the members attached to him are so sensible of its injustice or absurdity, from what they have heard, that it must be altered. The House of Commons is a mixed body, I except the minority, which I hold to be pure, (smiling)

but I take the whole house: it is a mass by no means pure; but neither is it wholly corrupt, though there is in it a large proportion of corruption: there are many members, who generally go with the Minister, who will not go all lengths. There are many honest well-meaning country gentlemen, who are in parliament only to keep up the consequence of their families. Upon most of these a good speech will have influence. The majority, indeed, will always follow where they are led."

Quo clamor vocat et turba faventium.

Some one speaking of place-hunters, Burke proceeded, "Taking your metaphor, you know that in hunting, few are so desperate as to follow without reserve; some do not chuse to leap ditches and hedges, and risk their necks, gallop over steep precipices, or dirty themselves in bogs and mires." Burke, on the same occasion, delivered his opinion concerning emigration. "We hear prodigious complaints at present of emigration. I am convinced that emigration makes a country more populous. Exportation of men, as of any other commodities, makes more be produced. Leave breeders, and you will have more people than if there were no emigration." Johnson observed, "there will be more people if there are more breeders. Thirty cows in good pasture will produce more calves than ten cows, provided they have good

bulls." Burke answered, " there are bulls enough in Ireland."

The club had now received great accessions of genius and literature. Mr. Gibbon, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Fox, became members. Fox was generally silent in the company of Johnson. That could not proceed from fear even of his talents. Who was, or is, the man whose powers Charles Fox need fear? His taciturnity, probably, proceeded from a desire of information and instruction, which a young man, of equal abilities, might reap from the knowledge and experience of the old sage. Gibbon did not distinguish himself in the club: he disliked Johnson, and did not enter freely into conversation when he was present. This dislike was perhaps partly owing to the very great difference of their theological tenets; and as, with all his talents and learning, he had a considerable share of vanity, probably in some degree to mortification at the superiority which, he must have been conscious, Johnson and some more of the members possessed over even a Gibbon. Johnson, besides, undervalued that species of literary effort in which Gibbon excelled, and had declared in his company that the greater part of what was called history was nothing but conjecture. Boswell says, that Johnson had talked with disgust concerning Gibbon's face, and that the philosopher resented the attack on his beauty; but Boswell

seems inclined to impute to him frivolous or bad motives. It is, however, certain that, whatever might be the cause, Gibbon was reserved in the club; and abstained from intellectual contests. What he said was rather epigrammatic and sarcastic than replete with the ability and learning which his great literary monument has displayed.

It was Johnson who proposed Mr. Sheridan to be a member, saying, when he recommended him, "he who has written the best comedies of the age must be a considerable man." Boswell considers the admission to the club as an honour to Sheridan. It certainly was a society in which there were several men of high eminence, and three to whom it would be difficult to find three equals: but it could not be reckoned a high honour to Sheridan to belong to a literary meeting, of which James Boswell was deemed worthy to be a member.

Burke, one evening at the club, speaking of the deanery of *Fern*, which was then vacant, said it must be *barren*, and that he believed there would be a contest for it between Dr. HEATH and Dr. Moss. Speaking of livings in general, "by this," he said, "that Horace describes a good manor"—

Est modis in rebus sunt certi denique fines:

Which he translated, "There is a modus in the tythes and fixed fines;" He met, one day,

with a young gentleman from Ireland, of better parts and birth than fortune, who was describing, with no little indignation, the purse-proud arrogance of some Scotch merchant, who had, he said, made a great deal of money by dealing in *kelp*, and looked down on gentlemen much his superiors in family and accomplishments. “ Ay,” replied Burke, “ he thinks,

Et genus et virtus nisi cum re vilior alga est.

Boswell, who seems to have thought that the doctrines of imputed merit extended to associates in civil life, as well as to matters of religious faith, and was very anxious to be in parties of distinguished men, formed a plan of bringing Johnson into a company in which Wilkes, whom the Doctor detested as impious and seditious, was to dine. Boswell, after surmounting very formidable obstacles, was successful; and the polite attentions of Wilkes conciliated Johnson. Boswell details the attentions with his usual minuteness; he dwells particularly on the assiduity with which the wit helped the sage to roast veal, and the eloquence with which he recommended stuffing, butter, and lemons, with a peroration on savoury fat and brown. Boswell afterwards narrated to Burke the history preliminary to this dinner, and unfolded his own efforts and difficulties in effectuating the important interview. He describes the opposition made by the Doctor's housekeeper to

his dining abroad; his own embassy to that personage, and the persuasive oratory by which he prevailed on her to consent; his throbbing exultation when the wise man called for a clean shirt; and finally, the completion of his joy, when he got the object of his adoration into a hackney coach. Boswell records that Burke gave him much credit for this very able and successful negotiation; and said, that there was nothing equal to it in the whole history of the *corps diplomatique*. The politeness and benevolence of Burke would not mortify inoffensive vanity, or repress well-meaning officiousness. Boswell thought the remark a very high compliment. Indeed he had a very happy disposition, to be pleased with praises which many others would have disliked as ironical.

In America hostilities were now commenced. It had frequently been asserted in parliament that the colonists were cowards. One gentleman declared that with three thousand men he could overrun America. This opinion was also very generally received out of the house. Hardly was there to be met a half-pay officer, who did not, at his village club, declare, that with two or three regiments he HIMSELF could subdue America. Burke, who knew the human mind, general history as well as the particular state, sentiments, and dispositions of the Americans, and could infer motive and action from situation and character, entertained a far dif-

ferent opinion ; an opinion which the first battle between the British and provincial troops tended to confirm. Although the colonists were defeated at Bunker's-hill, they lost fewer men than the British. Besides the valour of men fighting in what they conceived to be the cause of their own liberty, they had acquired great dexterity in the use of arms, and were excellent marksmen. The Americans made a successful inroad into Canada, and penetrated as far as Quebec.

The British Ministry not having foreseen so vigorous a resistance, had not made the preparations which coercive measures were found to require. Indeed it does not appear that they had been at pains, proportionate to the importance of the object, to attain full information on the dispositions and resources of the colonies : therefore, although we should admit the justice and even the expediency of the measures of Administration, we cannot give them much credit for the wisdom of their plans and vigour of their efforts at the commencement of the rupture. Perceiving, from the successes of the Americans, that the present force was very inadequate to the purposes of coercion, they resolved to open the following campaign with a much more powerful armament.

The congress sent Mr. Penn and Mr. Lee to London, to represent " the injustice sustained from the new system of statutes and re-

gulations ; to state that they had been forced to take up arms in their own defence ; to deprecate the farther effusion of blood ; and to pray that his Majesty would adopt some mode for the repeal of the hurtful acts." A petition to this purport was signed by John Hancock, the president, and all the members of the congress. It was delivered to Lord Dartmouth, Secretary of State. Soon afterwards the deputies were informed that no answer would be given.

The parliament opened with a speech, declaring the necessity of coercion. An address was proposed, echoing as usual the speech, to which a very able opposition was made. Burke, besides going over the grounds of injustice and inexpediency, demonstrated, that the Ministers were either very deficient in point of information, or in faithful reports to parliament.—They had, he said, given false accounts, representing dissatisfaction as confined to Boston, although it was well known to impartial enquirers that it had pervaded the colonies. He had himself repeatedly asserted, that the discontent was generally prevalent: the event had proved him to be right. Ministers, he argued, were either weak, in adopting momentous measures, or inadequate in information, or wicked in concealing the knowledge they possessed; and in either case unworthy of being trusted any longer with the conduct of affairs. He entered into a very minute

recapitulation of the boasts of Ministry, and contrasted them, with very severe humour, with the actual performance.

Fox, on the same occasion, poured forth a torrent of his powerful eloquence. In the plain, forcible language which forms one of the many excellencies of his speeches, he shewed what ought to have been done, what Ministers said would be done, and what was done. "Lord Chatham," he said, "the King of Prussia, nay, Alexander the Great, never gained more in one campaign than Lord North lost: *he has lost a whole continent.*" His sagacious mind, at the commencement of the war, foresaw the event. Fox perceived, and predicted, that men fighting for their liberty would be ultimately successful. He tried to dissuade his country from war, foreboding discomfiture and distress from such a contest. The admonitions of this great man were disregarded. His country hearkened not to his warning voice. The actual disaster and consequent calamity far exceeded the anticipation of even Fox's foresight.

November 16th, 1775, Burke brought forward a new conciliatory bill. In his two celebrated speeches of the preceding session and the session before that, he had grounded his propositions of amity upon the *mutual* INTERESTS of the mother country and the colonies. The ground of his present motion was the RIGHT of *subjects of this realm* to grant or withhold all

taxes, as recognized by the great financial statute passed in the reign of Edward I — *statutum de tallagio non concedendo*. On this statute, he observed, rested the *security of property* from arbitrary invasion: a security which constituted one of the most striking differences between Britain and absolute governments. He demonstrated the impracticability of the American subjects of Britain enjoying this privilege by representation in parliament, on account of the immense distance; and, therefore, that to be on an equal footing with other British subjects, they should be taxed by their own assemblies. Edward, one of the wisest and most vigorous sovereigns that ever sate upon the throne of England, had, on a dispute about taxation breaking out between him and his people, agreed to this law rather than continue the contest, so hurtful to both parties. In describing the character of Edward, he drew the line between the firmness of wisdom and the obstinacy of folly. "Wisdom pursued her ends no longer than she found them to be attainable and salutary. Folly, unable to distinguish, and filled with conceit, often continued to seek objects, merely because she had once done so." Burke proposed a bill, in the spirit of that famous statute, to renounce the future exercise of taxation without discussing the abstract question of right, to repeal all the laws complained of by the colonies, and to pass an im-

mediate amnesty. From the petition of the congress, the evidence of Mr. Penn, and many others, he inferred, that the bill would satisfy America. The speech was esteemed by both parties a most finished piece of eloquence; and, as well as the two other orations, and indeed most of the writings of Burke, shewed the ignorance and folly of those who assert, that Burke rarely speaks to the understanding, and chiefly to the imagination. It embraced every consideration of justice and expediency, debortatory of war and commendatory of peace. The views of Burke, on both the right and the prudence of the proceedings of government, from the commencement of the contest to this last effort to prevent children and parents embroiling their hands in the blood of each other, had been the same. “ It is impolitic to provoke to a separation from the mother-country colonies which contribute so largely to its wealth and prosperity. It is inconsistent with the constitution of Britain that any subject should be taxed but by himself or his representatives. Such, from a concurrence of causes, is the disposition of the Americans, that they will resist whatever they conceive to be oppression. If recourse be had to the sword, the conquest of America, at such a distance, in a country so intersected by rivers, entangled by woods, and fortified by mountains, its inhabitants inspired by the love of liberty, will be difficult, if not impracticable.

Should it be at all possible, it must be with an immense effusion of blood and treasure ; after America is so exhausted as to be unable to afford any indemnification. Our European rivals will watch the opportunity of intestine dissensions, and we shall be involved in a general war." These were the predictions of wisdom—

HEU NON CREDITA TEUCRIS !

To whatever subject Burke turned his thoughts, he looked before, behind, and about him :

αὐτὸς πρὸς ὧν καὶ ὀπίσσω

Λέυσει, ὅπως ὃ' ἔχ' ἀρίστα μετ' ἀμφοτέροισι γένηται.

“ Turns on all hands his deep discerning eyes ;

“ Sees what befel, and what may yet befall ;

“ Concludes from both, and best provides for all.”

Burke was not a man of ephemeral expedients, but of permanent plans. He not only saw what was actually the case, but what was the cause, and what was or would be the effect. The Minister talked of pacific assurances from foreign powers. The little details of diplomatique intrigue were not the grounds on which Burke formed his conclusions. He viewed human nature, and could from situation infer objects and passion, motive and action. He concluded that an opportunity of humbling a powerful and triumphant rival would not be slight while such passions as pride and ambition existed. He knew history in detail, but studied it in principle. From considering the

conduct of France in her relations of peace, neutrality, alliance, and war, with different powers of Europe, he could find the main spring of her policy. He saw ambition to be her ruling motive ; that her enmity was in proportion to the obstacles, to the gratification of that passion : that while extension of territorial power was her principal object, the house of Austria had been the chief butt of her attacks ; but that from the time that terrestrial superiority came to be considered as secondary to naval, Britain had been her most dreaded enemy. For near a century this country had been indirectly her most formidable opponent by land, and directly her conqueror by sea. Britain had been the soul of every confederacy that had repressed her ambition ; and in the preceding war had obtained a superiority unprecedented in former contests. The great naval power of England she beheld with jealousy, envy, resentment, and terror. She would rejoice at an internal contest which would employ great part of the British force, and enable her, and her dependent, Spain, to attack her triumphant rival with considerable probability of success. From these considerations, Burke concluded that a war with France and Spain would be a certain consequence of our perseverance in attempting to coerce America, and adduced that apprehension as a forcible collateral argument to assist his direct

reasoning in favour of conciliation. Thus did this illustrious senator, from the commencement of the dispute with the colonies, and during its progress, until it ripened into civil war, direct the full force of his extraordinary knowledge and powers to avert and prevent the rupture. If it would have been better for this country to have avoided war with her colonies, then was she indebted to the efforts of Burke in endeavouring to preserve peace. If the events not only in general, but in a great measure in detail, were such as he predicted, then must we give much praise to his sagacity and wisdom. If we acknowledge that the loss from the contest overbalanced the gain; if we admit that our advantage was not equivalent to myriads of men slain and to one hundred millions of debt incurred, we must allow that it would have been fortunate for Britain if she had followed the counsels of Burke. When we consider the CONSEQUENCES of the American war, not merely immediately as affecting Britain, in the waste of men and money, in the incumbrances entailed on posterity, and the increased price of every article of convenience, and even of necessity; but as affecting France, and through her Europe in general, and Britain in particular; that but for the revolution in America, the revolution in France probably either would not so soon have taken place, or would have been much less democratical, and in the natural course

less turbulent and despotical to herself, and dangerous and hurtful to her neighbours, we must wish that Government had followed the often repeated advice of Edmund Burke.

It has been frequently asserted, that the violence of Opposition stimulated the Americans to commence resistance, and encouraged its continuance: that, therefore, first, the American war, and next, its bad success, was owing to the opponents of government in this country, and above all to the ablest, most persevering, and constant of those opponents—to Shelburne, Chatham, Dunning, Fox, and Burke.

If our proceedings were originally unjust and unconstitutional, then were these senators right in their opposition. But to suppose that their abilities and eloquence caused the successful resistance of America, is supposing a cause, which, in the usual operation of moral causes as known from experience, was very inadequate to the effect. How the speeches of those at the distance of several thousand miles could enable men to make a successful stand against great armies, it is difficult to conceive; as difficult indeed in general, as it would be in particular, if one to assert that the capture of Burgoyne's army by General Gates, and Cornwallis's by General Green, were owing to Charles Fox and Edmund Burke. Other causes, both physical and moral, are easily discovered for these two events and the general success of the

Americans. Men *will* fight with the greatest vigour for their liberties, real or imagined, or whatever else warmly interests them. Men *can* fight with much greater advantage where they do know the country than where they do not. If America was conquerable by England, it must be by the men and money of England. These were under the direction of Government, through the majority in parliament. Whatever troops were proposed by Ministry for any destination, whatever money was said to be necessary for their equipment and maintenance, was granted. They had the choice of the commanders, and it was their own fault if they chose improper persons. Strange would it be if opposition eloquence was to be the cause which rendered all those advantages ineffectual!

The cause which Burke so powerfully espoused, had, besides Johnson, some able literary opponents, and, besides himself, some able literary defenders. He, of political antagonists, between whom and Burke there was the greatest degree of contention, was Doctor Tucker. That gentleman, Dean of Gloucester and Prebend of Bristol, had made commerce a principal object of his study, had distinguished himself by several ingenious publications on trade, and had turned his attention to the contest arising between America and her mother

country owing to the revenue laws. Doctor Tucker had asserted that the opposition to the stamp-act had encouraged the Americans to resistance. His opinion had drawn forth the severe animadversion of Burke in his speech on American taxation. " This (he says) has formerly appeared in print, in a regular volume, from an advocate of that faction, (court favourites) a Doctor Tucker. This Doctor Tucker is already a Dean, and his earnest labours in this vineyard will, I suppose, raise him to a bishopric. But this assertion too, just like the rest, is false." The idea, that a Dean would serve the court in order to become a bishop, was certainly derogatory to the clerical character. Doctor Tucker disavowed so corrupt motives, in a letter addressed to Mr. Burke.

In that letter he endeavoured to draw Mr. Burke's character, as a speaker and a writer, in the following words: " My only difficulty," says he, " is to state your meaning with accuracy and precision. Not that you yourself are unable to express your own thoughts with the utmost clearness, as well as energy, but you are unwilling ; for you excel in the art of ambiguous expressions, *i. e.* in giving one sense to your readers, and reserving another to yourself, if called upon to defend what you have said. You excel, I say, in this art, perhaps the most of any man living. Sometimes you express more than you mean, and at other times

less ; but at all times you have one general end in view, viz. to amuse with tropes and figures, and great swelling words, your audience or your readers, and not to let them see your drift and intention till you have drawn your net around them." That Burke could express himself with great ambiguity, and involve his meaning in tropes and figures, is undoubtedly true : he could speak or write in any style he chose : but this speech, to which Dr. Tucker refers, is as perspicuous as any speech that could be written, as an impartial reader must immediately perceive. The passage respecting Tucker himself is as clear as any in the whole speech, and without a trope or figure from the beginning to the end of it.—Burke's allegation is simply this : Tucker asserts, that the opposition in parliament to the stamp-act caused the disturbances in America. " This assertion is false. In all the papers which have loaded your table, in all the vast crowd of verbal witnesses that appeared at your bar—witnesses which were indiscriminately produced from both sides of the house, not the least hint of such a cause of disturbance has ever appeared." Burke's meaning here is obvious, and perfectly free from the studied ambiguity imputed to him by the Dean : plainer or more precise language cannot be found. His conjecture also about Tucker's motives, whether just or not, is certainly so expressed as to be very intelligible. It would appear that the

Dean, who is himself a very vigorous and precise reasoner when he chuses, here instead of speaking directly to the point, the primary causes of the disturbances in America, and to Burke's particular attack on his arguments, turns aside to irrelative observations on Burke's general mode of expression.

Some months after this reply, when, at the general election, a great body of the Bristol voters requested (as has been said) Burke to stand candidate, Dr. Tucker exerted himself to oppose his success. In this opposition he co-operated with Lord Nugent, who was the friend of Tucker, and inimical to the party that supported Burke. The Dean now proposed a plan, differing on the one hand from the conciliatory intention of Burke, on the other from the coercive plans of Ministry. This was, a total separation of the mother country from the colonies; a proposition attacked in Johnson's ministerial *Taxation no Tyranny*, and mentioned with the most slighting contempt in Burke's *Speech on Conciliation*. "Another plan has indeed been started, that of giving up the colonies; but it met so slight a reception, that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the frowardness of peevish children; who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to have nothing at all." From the event it appears, that even a total separation would

have been more fortunate for us without hostilities, than a plan of coercion, which, after a long and expensive war, was to end with that separation. The event has justified the anticipation of Dean Tucker's sagacity.

The Minister proposed a bill to prohibit all trade and commerce with the United Colonies, with severe penalties against those who should transgress the law; and commissioners to enforce its observance. One of the ablest supporters of the proposition was Mr. Wedderburne, who reasoned with an ingenuity that few could equal. Burke opposed the motion with his usual ability, as of the greatest detriment to Britain, and ineffectual against America. "When the colonies (he said) found they would not be supplied by this country, they would go to other markets. Britain would lose a great source of wealth, with little annoyance to the colonies, and to the gain of foreign nations. Besides future trade, it would be injurious as to the past, as great debts were owing to the British merchants from the colonies; and if all commerce was prohibited, an immediate stop would be put to payments: that thus merchants would be ruined without the cause of government being advanced. The bill was retrospective, for by it the Minister inflicted punishment for acts thought innocent when committed. Our Saviour sent his apostles to teach and proclaim peace to all nations; but

the political apostles, to be sent out by the Minister, would be harbingers of civil war, in all its most horrid and hideous forms, accompanied by fire, sword, and famine." Fox also made a strenuous opposition to the bill, but it availed nothing; it was passed into a law. As this scheme was alledged to be contrived to starve America, and imputed to a Scotchman, it gave rise to many jokes. Wilkes, speaking of this bill, and perhaps also alluding to the slenderness of the Solicitor's person, called him *Starvation Wedderburne*. Mr. Dundas distinguished himself on this question, by his plain, strong reasoning; and though somewhat laughed at for his pronounciation by those that attended to sound more than to sense, was heard with great attention by the leading men of Opposition, as well as by his own party. Whatever jokes he underwent on account of his broad Scotch, no one, that looked in his face could, on that ground, call him STARVATION-Harry. Mr. David Hartley proposed a conciliatory bill, somewhat different in detail from Burke's, but on the same general principles,—the abandonment of taxation, and the repeal of the obnoxious laws. Burke supported this bill, but to no effect.

All attempts being unavailing to prevent the continuance of the war, its conduct next became a subject of animadversion. In the discussion of this subject Fox took the lead. The Americans, he contended, had been successful

in the preceding campaign, that their success must be owing either to the weakness and inadequacy of the ministerial plans, or to the misconduct, or misfortune of the military and naval commanders ; and therefore moved an inquiry, as the means of fixing the blame, if there was any, or ascertaining if there was not. " Admitting (said Mr. Fox) the coercion of America to be right, the question is about the means. The means have not hitherto answered the end: we must inquire to what that has been owing, that we may hereafter either employ better means or apply them more vigorously. If we wish to subdue America let us see how it is to be done ; and for that purpose, what has till now prevented our progress."

Fox pressed the necessity of an inquiry with such force, that the Ministry could not answer him directly, but were obliged to elude the question by the common-place pretext of this not being the proper time for an inquiry : an answer that certainly saves the trouble of making any reply to the most unanswerable reasoning. Indeed, whenever Fox chose the right side, and brought forward the full force of his mind in supporting it, evasion was the most prudent mode of opposition to his arguments.

Opimus

Fallere et effugere est triumphus.

A petition being presented against the prohibitory bill from the West-India merchants,

for the immense loss that must accrue to them by the interclusion of commerce with America, Burke shewed himself completely master of the West India trade, and entered into a very accurate detail of the various articles of traffic between the Islands and the Colonies. Finding that the Ministry paid no regard to the petition, or to any information tending to shew the hurtfulness of the contest with America, he proposed the following ironical resolution: "That it is necessary and proper to come to a resolution, that evidence concerning the state of America, the temper of the people there, and the probable resolutions of an act now depending, is unnecessary to this house, this house being already sufficiently acquainted with these matters." When we recollect the obstinacy with which Ministry refused to listen to any representations in favour of America, or to examine evidence on the subject, we must allow that the irony was fair. In discussing this question, both parties went over the whole grounds of the American dispute: the Ministers declared themselves convinced that the provincials would yield on the first appearance of the great armament then preparing against them, and avowed that nothing short of unconditional submission would satisfy Government. Burke persisted in supporting his uniform opinion to the contrary; and from the treasures of his historical knowledge quoted

examples of the fate of armaments sent to a distant country, and dwelt on the destruction of the fleet and army of the Athenians at Syracuse. Among many instances of the successful resistance of men fighting for their liberty, he entered at large into that of the United Provinces, against which forces were not to be sent at the distance of three thousand miles, but from their neighbourhood, forces much more numerous and equally disciplined, and against a much inferior body of people to the Americans, both in number and resources.

Burke is believed to be the author, or at least the reviser of various pamphlets and essays not avowed by him, censuring the measures of Government. It is certain that many of the writings on that side contain arguments that had been used by Burke.

The Ministerial writers were more numerous than the Opposition, but less able. Except Johnson, Dr. Fergusson, Dean Tucker, and Mr. Baion, the writers for Ministry were mostly men of inconsiderable talents. Dr. Fergusson's pamphlet contained the most ingenious reasoning: Mr. Baron's account of the state of ancient colonies shewed much information, but did not afford either new or strong arguments; the question not being how ancient states treated their colonies, but how it was right and expedient for Great Britain to treat her colonies in the existing circumstances.

A history made its appearance about this time, which, with a considerable degree of intrinsic merit, had the extrinsic advantage of being on a subject analogous to the great matter in dispute: Watson's History of Philip II. comprehending the rise, progress, and successful issue of the assertion of liberty by the Low Countries, and shewing in detail, from recent example, what Burke so frequently pressed on the attention of the house—the energy with which men, even before not accustomed to war, fight in vindication of what either are or they think their rights.

The Annual Register has been generally ascribed to Burke; but from internal evidence I should apprehend, that although it might be directed by him, he did not take a great share in the composition.

Although Burke was not successful in his great object, the prevention of the American war, he exerted his powers to endeavour to lessen its expensiveness. His details on this subject were very correct, and very important, giving a most exact account of what might have been spent, and what was spent; shewing, that the Minister gave contracts, to answer parliamentary purposes, on terms much worse for Government than some would have offered. On the subject of expence, as on every other, he was the oracle that was consulted by his party. There might be among the Opposition several

men equal to him in some things, but none in all. In close logical deduction he was, no doubt, equalled by Camden, in precision by Dunning, in foreign information by Shelburne, in animated eloquence by Chatham, in strength of reasoning, he, or no man, exceeded Charles Fox: but, on the whole, no man of Opposition, in either house, equalled, or nearly equalled, Edmund Burke; and if we were even to take the two ablest men away from the Opposition during the American war; if Burke and Fox had been neutral, the balance of talents would still have been in favour of the Whig party. In the upper house there were three men of very great talents on the one side, and one on the other. Camden had no equal among the friends of Ministry except Mansfield, whom it is evident he fully matched in logical reasoning, although he fell short of him in graceful oratory, in fascinating and persuasive eloquence; and certainly surpassed him in the knowledge of the constitution. Chatham and Shelburne had no equals, except the same great law lord; nor were there any of the ministerial members of the House of Commons, whom any one, that knew the history and characters of the times, would think of placing on a footing with Chatham and Camden. But when to such men we add Burke and Fox, where were their equals to be found?

Although Burke adhered closely to a party, he by no means went every length with its most

violent members. Mr. Wilkes made a motion for a reform in parliament, which Burke did not think seasonable in time of war: Lord North treated the subject in too ridiculous a manner.

Burke proposed this session a very humane bill, "to prevent the inhuman custom of plundering ships wrecked on the coast of Great Britain, and for the farther relief of ships in distress on the said coast." At first Ministry did not seem averse to it, but at last it was thrown out by a considerable majority.

Although the American war had been demonstrated by the ablest reasoners, both in and out of parliament, to be unjust and inexpedient; and although its effects were severely felt by the manufacturing and trading towns, in many parts of the country it was extremely popular. No pains were spared by Ministers to make it pass for a war to maintain the just rights, and the most momentous interests of Britain. It was inculcated by the court, that if we should succeed in coercing America, we should receive so great a revenue from that country, as to make an important diminution of taxes. The belief, that the coercion of the colonies tended to lessen the burthens at home, made numbers well affected to the war. The grandees connected with the court contributed their efforts to spread this spirit. Many of the inferior gentry took it for granted, especially in those parts in which the remains of feu-

dal notions gave more than the constitutional weight to the nobility, adopted the opinions which they found embraced by Lords and Dukes, and concurred in stigmatizing as rebels every one who opposed the plans of Administration. A considerable part of the trading interest saw the prospect of contracts and other profits of war. The pulpits, too often the vehicles of popular delusion, mindless of the meek and peaceful doctrines, precepts, and examples of him whom they professed to obey and follow, thundered out imprecations of vengeance against the defenders of their liberties. If any of the number, instead of calling upon God to hurl down destruction, instead of beseeching infinite Goodness to become the agent of malignity, in the true spirit of morality, piety, and Christianity, prayed for peace between the mother country and her colonies, "to turn the hearts of the parents to the children, and the children to the parents," he was sure to be reviled as a rebel. The BEST INFORMED AND ABLEST men, however, in all parts of the country (except those by possession or expectation linked with the court or courtiers) reprobated the war with America. But if the informed and the able could reason, the ignorant and the weak could rail. Those who could not refute the arguments of a Chatham, a Fox, and a Burke, were at no loss for opprobrious names. They styled the supporters of liberty, and the enemies

of war, Yankees, Republicans, Cromwellians, and Levellers. Burke was peculiarly obnoxious, because he had been (of very able men) the longest, most constant, and persevering opposer of American taxation and coercion.

The common talk among courtiers and their dependents in town, the nobility and their retainers in the country, was, that the Americans were rebels, and that the rebellion was owing to Opposition leaders. Burke was not moved; by the attacks of servility and selfishness, from the road of patriotism; nor, by the frivolous defamation of ignorance and folly, from the measures of wisdom; measures unhappily not adopted by his country.

His enlarged mind did not enter into all the narrow views even of his own party. When Mr. Thomas Townshend, a zealous Whig, expressed his disapprobation of pensions given to Tory writers, and among others even that of Johnson, Burke defended the propriety of that pension as a tribute to merit of the highest kind, not a purchase of mean service.

Burke was also very liberal in his encomiums on Lord North's general abilities and dispositions, however he disliked his political measures. He used to say he possessed one of the best heads and one of the best hearts in the world; he thought that, in point of sterling wit, he excelled all men. This regard was reciprocal; there was no man whom Lord North

so greatly admired, and very few whom he was privately more desirous to oblige. Burke often applied to him in behalf of his friends, and never in vain, if no political interest interfered: "There is, my Lord, (he would say) an office vacant that would just suit a very able and worthy friend of mine; if you have no parliamentary interest to answer, do let him have the place." "In this case I am happy, my dear Mr. Burke, I can gratify you." It indeed was not surprising that two of the ablest and most amiable men in the nation should cherish private esteem and regard, notwithstanding political enmity. On the other hand, there were some of his political associates that he privately disliked; one nobleman, in particular, generally accused of duplicity, he always carefully avoided as a JESUIT.

The campaign of 1776 was more successful than the preceding, as every political reader must remember. The advantages, however, did not seem to bring the subjugation of America any nearer than it was. The Americans were at first somewhat disheartened by the successes of the British; but finding that they either did not or could not pursue their victories, resumed their spirits. Resentment also contributed to this effect. Unconditional submission was required of them, and peace offered to those only who surrendered at discretion. Finding themselves placed on a footing quite different from

other British subjects, and that they were declared rebels, because they would not submit to taxation but by themselves and their representatives, they resolved to assert their independence. They considered protection and allegiance as relative duties precisely commensurate, and contended that the King's refusal to attend to their petitions and to redress their grievances was an exclusion of the colonies from his protection; and as protection and allegiance were subjects of barter, if the one was withheld, the other could not be granted. The congress, in conformity with the instructions of the delegates from their constituents, declared America independent. After detailing their various grievances, they concluded, "that on account of the King of Great Britain having refused to redress them, the inhabitants of the United Colonies were thereby discharged and absolved from all allegiance and obedience to him." This declaration was ratified by most of the provincial assemblies. A pamphlet, entitled "Common Sense," published by Thomas Paine, afterwards so famous in Europe, contributed very much to the ratification of the independence of America. It was written with that plain and simple energy which he can exert on any subject within the reach of his knowledge, and which makes even sophistry impressive on untutored minds, that

judge more from the strength of the language than the truth of the arguments.

Proposals for peace were made by the British commanders to the Americans. The Americans, having once asserted their independence, were determined to preserve it, and refused to admit any proposals but as an independent state.

When parliament met, a motion was made by Lord John Cavendish on the grounds of one of the proclamations by the Howe's, offering pardon to all Americans who should return to their allegiance, and offering to such a revision of the obnoxious measures. Lord John proposed, that the house should enter into a committee for the revisal of the acts. This measure was supported by the utmost ability of Burke, who, it must be confessed, was frequently led by party to greater lengths than impartial judgment could approve, though never to extremities. He certainly could not have expected that the motion would have produced any good effect. The Americans had made no overtures for conciliation, and refused to admit any but on a ground to which British acts could not apply. What purpose could it serve to make or unmake laws for a country declaring itself totally unconnected with the enactors? Besides, as war *was actually commenced*, whether it was originally right or wrong, the object was peace on the best terms

that could be had. Concession on one side, without any on the other, is not the way to procure honourable terms of peace. Such a concession would have tended to increase the demands of the Americans, instead of inducing them to come forward with reasonable offers.

Lord North proposed two bills respecting America: one for issuing out letters of marque, another for a suspension of the habeas corpus as far as the Americans were concerned. This was called the treason and piracy bill, on the ground that the Americans were British subjects, and consequently in fighting against Britain were guilty of treason; and if in privateers, or any other ships attacking or taking vessels belonging to Britain, must be guilty of piracy. This latter bill was very ably opposed by Mr. Dunning, on the ground that nothing short of a rebellion in the heart of the kingdom existing, or apprehended, justified the suspension of this important law; that the power of detaining persons on mere suspicion, without bringing them to a trial, invested Ministers with a dictatorial authority inconsistent with personal liberty and security. Burke and some others of the leading members of Opposition withdrew from the house when this or any question respecting America was discussed. They did attend on ordinary business, but immediately after that was dispatched retired. They said, they were tired with opposing reason and argument to superior power and num-

bers. This secession was not approved of by Opposition in general, and indeed does not appear justifiable. Eloquence, as Burke observed on another occasion, though it might not procure a majority to members of Opposition, was not without its effect, in modifying measures of Ministry. Indeed a very recent instance shewed, that as the late bill had, in consequence of the masterly discussion it underwent, been modified and defined in a manner it would not have been without that opposition, if the bill was bad, the opposition on the whole did good.

The object of this life not being to support any hypothesis concerning Burke's consistency or inconsistency, but impartially to narrate facts, and at the close to form a summary of the character, I think it my duty to state truth, whatever effect the statement may have.

Secession from parliament being uncommon, though not unprecedented, Burke considered it as incumbent on him to justify his conduct. He wrote an address to the king, stating the motives of the seceders.

The address has been printed in several of the newspapers, and contains Burke's notions respecting the British constitution, and the various great events by which it has been effected. As it never has been avowedly published as Burke's, for the sake of those readers who may not have seen the papers in which it was

inserted, I shall endeavour to give the substance, with extracts from the most material parts.

The justificatory memorial sets out with representing to his Majesty the distracted state of affairs. Our situation it imputes to the misconduct of Government. The alledged misconduct, after considerable detail, it generalizes into the following short description. " That grievance is as simple in its nature, and as level to the most ordinary understanding, as it is powerful in affecting the most languid passions. It is an attempt made to dispose of the property of a whole people, without their consent. Your Majesty's subjects in the colonies, possessing the ordinary faculties of mankind, know, that to live under such a plan of government, is not to live in a state of freedom. The sense of a whole people, most gracious sovereign, never ought to be contemned by wise and beneficent rulers. When no means are possessed of power to awe, or to oblige, the strongest ties which connect mankind in every relation, social and civil, and which teach them mutually to respect each other, are broken. Independence from that moment virtually exists. In this state of things, we were of opinion, that satisfaction ought instantly to be given, or that, at least, the punishment of the disorder ought to be attended with the redress of the grievances. Because, whenever a disorder arises

from, and is directly connected with a grievance, to confine ourselves to the punishment of the disorder, is to declare against the reason and justice of the complaint. The methods recommended and followed, as infallible means of restoring peace and order, we could not consider as at all adapted to their purposes.—We could not conceive, when disorders had arisen from the complaint of one violated right, that to violate every other was the proper means of quieting exasperated minds. Recourse was had to force, and we saw a force sent out, enough to menace liberty, but not to awe resistance.” He afterwards goes over the various measures of Government, both of coercion and conciliation, shewing both to be inadequate ; affirms, that in the barbarity of the Germans and the atrocity of the American savages there was the infliction of misery without the advancement of conquest. He proceeds to the arbitrary doctrines which were becoming prevalent, and as a contrast to these boldly describes the principles of the revolution, and of the establishment of the Brunswick family on the throne of England.

“ Sire, your throne cannot stand secure upon the principles of unconditional submission, or passive obedience,—on powers exercised without the concurrence of the people to be governed,—on acts made in defiance of their prejudices and habits,—on acquiescence procured

by foreign mercenary troops, and secured by standing armies. They may possibly be the foundation of other thrones: they must be the subversion of yours.

“ It was not to passive principles in our ancestors that we owe the honour of appearing before a Sovereign, who cannot feel that he is a prince without knowing that we ought to be free. The revolution is a departure from the ancient course of the descent of this monarchy—the people re-entered into their original rights; and it was not because a positive law authorized the act, but because the freedom and safety of the subject, the origin and causes of all laws, required a proceeding paramount and superior to them. At that ever-memorable and instructive period, the letter of the law was superseded in favour of the substance of liberty. To the free choice, therefore, of the people, without either King or Parliament, we owe that happy establishment, of which both King and Parliament were regenerated.”

This representation to the Sovereign, which may be very justly styled a remonstrance, did not meet with the approbation of other chief men of the party. He therefore desisted from his intention.

Anxious to do justice to the subject of this narrative, I think it my duty to mark the occasional excess of his zeal for liberty, and of

other beneficial sentiments, as well as his general principles: an excess leading to evil, as their wise and moderate operation led to good.— His principles were indeed those of the most enlarged, liberal, and practical philosophy; but in his application of them he was not unfrequently misled by fancy, or transported by passion, to notions, expressions, and conduct, which his understanding, when unbiassed, could by no means approve. Whatever his ardent mind pursued, it pursued with its full force.— No understanding could take a wider or more comprehensive survey of the connections and relations of objects; yet his eager contemplation of whatever engaged his attention, or interested his affections, made him frequently overlook important parts of the prospect. If he viewed liberty, he would sometimes omit to turn his eyes to order; if order, to liberty.

Burke laid similar sentiments before the public, in a Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, his constituent city.

Were we to consider the speech of an orator as we do the theorem of a mathematician, as stating a proposition either to be true or false, and by a chain of intermediations proving the asserted truth or falsehood; and to consider the speech as good or bad accordingly, as we should the demonstrations, many speeches of the highest celebrity, the result of very great talents and knowledge, would be in no estimation.

Cicero's oration in defence of Milo does not make out the case. He assumes that Clodius intended to attack Milo ; and from that assumption of intention assumes that he actually did attack : from the two assumptions he infers the killing of Clodius to be justifiable homicide in self-defence. There is no evidence to support either of the assumptions. The aggression not being proved to have been on the side of Clodius, Milo could not be proved to have killed him in self-defence. Cicero therefore does not demonstrate that *which was to be demonstrated*. The orator, however, is admired not for MAKING OUT THE CASE, but for the ingenuity of the deductions from assumed premises, and for the pathetic sentiments, for displaying a very strong understanding and a very feeling heart. The same observation applies to many of the orations of other eminent speakers : we must often consider them rather as exhibitions of the general ability, knowledge, or feelings of the author, than as evictions of the truths undertaken to be proved.

If we consider Burke's Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, and estimate its excellence by its fitness to justify his secession from parliament, his reasons do not amount to a justification.

But although the state of the country, and the measures of government, even if they were as bad as Burke represents, do not prove that he was right in withdrawing his assistance, the

letter is a fresh instance of his wonderful powers.

In examining the merits of the habeas corpus suspension, from the measure he went to its proposers, and took a wide view of the whole of their conduct on American affairs. After detailing the various proceedings of Government, their injustice, inexpediency, and hurtful effects, he rises to a generalization of the principles to which they have been owing; and the consequences, not to the colonies only but to the spirit of our legislation,—to law, to manners, and to morals.

In this, as in all his works, he shews his aversion to the application of unqualified metaphysical principles to affairs. Experience, and not abstraction, according to Burke, ought to be the guide in practice and in conduct. Government, he conceived, ought to be accommodated to the known opinions and sentiments of the people: if, under the same empire, provinces, or classes of men of very different notions should be placed, that their polity ought to be diversified accordingly. “Instead,” he says, “of troubling our understandings with speculations concerning the unity of empire, and the identity or distinction of legislative powers, it was our duty, in all soberness, to conform our government to the character and circumstances of the several people who composed the mighty and strangely diver-

sified mass. I never was wild enough to conceive, that one method would serve for the whole ; that the natives of Hindostan and those of Virginia could be ordered in the same manner ; or that the Cutchery court and the grand jury of Salem could be regulated on a similar plan. I was persuaded that government was a practical thing, made for the happiness of mankind ; and not to furnish out a spectacle of uniformity, to gratify the schemes of visionary politicians."

In speaking of the tendency of ministerial counsels to arbitrary power, he attacks Hume as too friendly to unlimited monarchy. He quotes an observation from his essays in support of this assertion—" Mr. Hume," he says, " will not be singular in telling us, that the felicity of mankind is no more disturbed by it (absolute power) than by earthquakes or thunder, or the other more unusual accidents of nature."

Burke, as I have said, was prejudiced against Hume. That Hume was friendly to despotism, is an opinion more consistent with a cursory reading of his works than an accurate perusal. Where our great historian is favourable to the house of Stuart, he appears rather to palliate than justify the conduct of its princes. He contends, that it was *natural* for them to endeavour to retain the powers which their immediate predecessors had enjoyed, not that it was *just* ; al-

though, from the coolness of his temper, and the profoundness of his understanding, he disapproved of the religious fanaticism of the Puritans, he acknowledges that, as friends to liberty, they rendered their country important services. He even commends their exertions, as far as they tended to the restriction of unlimited power, and to the establishment of such a constitution as we now possess. He attacks their political efforts only when they tend to the subversion of the monarchy. Their theological absurdities he certainly ridicules, as he also does the high church bigotry. He exposes the superstitious mummeries of Laud, as well as the enthusiastic phrenzy of James Naylor or Praise-God-Barebone. He justifies resistance in cases of great oppression. He approves of Hambden. His philosophical mildness added to his wisdom in reprobating turbulence; but he as severely condemns oppression, and stigmatises those parliaments which were the tools of despotism. His expanded mind is not particularly anxious to make England appear to have possessed a great share of liberty at very early periods: at the same time he allows, during the Saxon reigns, there was a considerable portion. He does not deem precedent necessary to establish our rights to freedom. The existence of a House of Commons previous to the time of Edward I. was not the antecedent from which such a logician as Hume deduced the consequent,

that the people ought, by themselves or their delegates, to have a share in the legislature.—According to this philosophical observer and surveyor of the progress of man, rational liberty grew and increased with knowledge and wisdom. If Burke had not been incensed against Hume, it is probable he would have considered the general scope, rather than particular passages of his writings.

In speaking of that effects the civil war would produce on the manners of the people, he draws the following glowing picture :—“ Civil wars strike deepest of all into the manners of a people. They vitiate their politics, they corrupt their morals, they pervert even the natural-taste and relish of equity and justice. By teaching us to consider our fellow-citizens in an hostile light, the whole body of our nation becomes gradually less dear to us: the very names of affection and kindred, which were the bond of charity whilst we agreed, become new incentives to hatred and rage, when the communion of our country is dissolved. We may flatter ourselves that we shall not fall into this misfortune, but we have no charter of exemption, that I know of, from the ordinary frailties of our nature.”

The Earl of Abingdon wrote a pamphlet of considerable ability and merit, in reply to Burke's letter, at least to that part of it which apologized for his secession from parliament. There was also another respondent. The very

celebrated letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, one of the ablest performances of Edmund Burke, was answered by Edward Topham, Esq!

Johnson disapproved very much of this letter of Burke ; he particularly ridiculed his definition of liberty. “ That (said Burke) is freedom to every practical purpose, which the people think so.” Johnson said, “ I will let the King of France govern me on those conditions, for it is to be governed just as I please.” Whatever it may to a Tory, the definition will not appear ridiculous to a Whig, nor indeed to an impartial neutralist. Liberty is one of the means of happiness. Happiness depends very much on opinion. The belief, that I enjoy that means of happiness, has to me, as long as it lasts, the same effect as the reality: the more the mind advances in knowledge the more will belief follow reality ; but it is the opinion, not its justness, that constitutes the enjoyment.

Burke does not differ more from his political opponent, Johnson, than from his coadjutor, Price. If he disapproves of arbitrary bigotry on the one hand, he scouts metaphysical refinements of republicanism on the other. “ There are (he says) people who have split and anatomized the doctrine of free government, as if it were an abstract question concerning metaphysical liberty and necessity, and not a matter of moral prudence and natural feeling. SPECULATIONS ARE LET LOOSE, AS DESTRUCTIVE TO

ALL AUTHORITY, as the former (slavish doctrines) are to all freedom ; *and every government is called tyranny and usurpation which is not formed on their fancies. In this manner the stirrers up of this contention are corrupting our understandings ; they are endeavouring to tear up, along with practical liberty, all the foundations of human society, all equity and justice, religion and order.* In these and other observations of the same tendency, Burke displays the power of his foresight, in perceiving what would be the bitterness of the fruit of doctrines then only budding. In the wild theories at that time beginning to be framed, he saw and reprobated the seeds of the *Rights of Man*. He evidently alluded to “ Price’s Civil Liberty ” and “ Priestley’s first Principles of Government.” Price felt the allusion so much, that a considerable portion of an introduction to an edition of his “ Observations ” is employed in an attempt to refute Burke. How superficial examiners of the writings of both must those be, who assert that Dr. Price and Mr. Burke, in maintaining the cause of the Americans, discover the same political principles ! There is not in any of his writings on the French revolution to be found principles more opposite to the doctrines of the Rights of Man than in this letter.

Although Burke did not regularly compose any part of the Annual Register, yet when a subject, either literary or political, of very great

importance, occurred, he frequently contributed his efforts. This year brought forward a work on new subjects of physical and moral nature :—Robertson's History of America. The account of that production of industry and genius, given in the Annual Register, bears the marks of Burke's philosophical criticism. It shews an extent of moral and political views, similar to that which his writings usually display. This examination does not teem with imagery, but is what Burke's compositions on subjects of mere disquisition frequently are, a connected system of observation and deduction.

The same year that brought to the world a serious performance of the first magnitude, produced also a comedy, greatly superior to any of the same class that had appeared since the time of Congreve. The reader must immediately perceive that this description can apply to no work of the present or the last age, but the " SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL " Philosophical history and comic poetry, both likely to descend to the latest posterity, as they were both most excellent in their kind, were coeval in their birth. When we take a view of literary talents at this time, we find these realms standing fully as high as in political. In the three great departments of genius,—poetry, history, and philosophy,—the efforts were great, and collectively equal to any that had ever been made in any age or country. There, no doubt, have been individuals of still

greater powers than any displayed in these times. There have been brighter luminaries, but never a greater constellation. Indeed men of very extraordinary genius, as is remarked by one of the first of our living philosophers (Mr. Dugald Stewart) have seldom existed in a literary and scientific age. But, though the individual endowment may be greater in ages not literary, the aggregate is much greater in learned. In poetry the number at this time was much more limited than at several periods of British history. Comedy appeared to have monopolized poetical excellence. In the true sense of the word, Burke possessed the greatest degree of poetic genius: in common language, however, the effusions of his prolific and sublime imagination and ardent passions would not be stiled poetry. In history Britain never equalled, Rome and Greece never surpassed, Gibbon, Robertson, and Hume. In ratiocinative eloquence Rome hardly equalled, Greece did not surpass, Fox and Burke; and no country known to us from history presented such an assemblage of learned and able speakers. In criticism there was, amidst great and manifold, though inferior excellence, the expanded views and profound investigation of the author of the *Sublime and Beautiful*, and of the writer of the *Preface to Shakespeare* and of the *Lives of the Poets*. Philosophy, natural and moral, abstract and practical, was diffused over the nation;

and had numbers of skilful and successful votaries. Physics rose, through gradations of most vigorous efforts, to the researches of a Watson and a Black, and the discoveries of a Priestley and a Franklin. To pneumatology Reid and Fergusson applied the sure mode of experiment and investigation, laying aside hypothetical theories: the acute and profound understandings of both pursuing the right track, carried that abstruse science to a perfection and certainty before unknown. In practical philosophy, among many exertions of great utility and note, there were the commercial lessons of Smith and the moral inculcations of Johnson. While other authors were distinguishing themselves in the several branches of literature and science, Burke manifested his acquaintance with almost all. In his speeches in parliament, he shewed himself capable of producing history, poetry, and philosophy, of the highest excellence. In the knowledge of man he was and could be surpassed by none: yet, from the theatre which he chose, his powers and attainments produced much less effect than those of many greatly his inferiors. He narrated, he described, he reasoned, he reflected; his narrations, his descriptions, his reasonings, his reflections, were overpowered by ministerial majorities. Had Socrates devoted those exertions, and that time, to unavailing contests in public assemblies, which he employed in communicating the purest and

sublimest morals ; had Johnson bestowed on parliamentary contention that force and labour which gave to the world the Rambler, the Idler, the Lives of Addison, of Pope, of Savage, Dryden, Milton, and the Preface to Shakespeare ; had Hume spent in the House of Commons, and in political factions, those hours which produced the History of England, which unfolded the progress of man from barbarism to civilization, which raised an illustrious monument, shewing what was right and wrong, wise and unwise, the loss to society might have been somewhat equivalent to that which it has sustained from the direction to party of a mind fitted to grasp the universe.

Before parliament met the ensuing winter, very important events had taken place in America. General Howe, with the main army, had gained several victories, which many have asserted might have put an end to the war. General Burgoyne, with the northern army, endeavouring to effect a junction with the Commander in Chief, got into a defile, and was compelled to surrender.

In the sessions 1777, Burke returned to his vigorous attention to parliamentary business. During no preceding meeting had there been such a quantity of important affairs, and in none had the power of Burke been more frequently called forward. Not America only, but France and Ireland, occupied the attention

of parliament. The discussion of the concerns of the sister kingdom brought him into a very delicate predicament, in which, in the discharge of his duty, he was under the necessity of acting contrary to the opinion of his constituents, who had, unsolicited, applied to him to be their representative, as the strenuous champion of mercantile interest.

An amendment recommending peace was proposed to the address. Burke dwelt less on the original injustice and inexpediency of the war than formerly. He confined himself chiefly to its management and effects. He entered into a very minute and extensive consideration of the force employed, and the expence incurred ; proving from documents that the year 1777 cost as many men, and more money, against the Americans, than in any year of our wars against the combined power of the house of Bourbon. November 28, Mr. Fox having moved, that certain papers should be laid before the house, Lord North at first agreed, afterwards made exceptions. Burke said, “ I never heard the noble Lord behave with so much candour, generosity, and spirit, as he had shewn in agreeing to the request. He had published a bond, wherein he granted all ; but in the end was inserted a *little defeasance*, with a power of revocation, by which he preserved himself from the execution of every grant he had made. His conduct reminded me of a

certain Governor, who, when he arrived at the place of his appointment, sat down to a table, covered with profusion, and abounding in every dainty and delicacy, that art, nature, and a provident steward could furnish: but a pigny physician watched over the health of the Governor, excepted to one dish, because it was hard of digestion; to another, because it was unhealthy: in this progressive mode robbed the Governor of every dish on his table, and left him without a dinner."

When the news arrived of the melancholy catastrophe of Burgoyne's expedition, Burke joined the warmest of the party in imputing the failure to Administration, although hitherto there were no documents to prove Ministers to be blameable, either in the plan, or in the means afforded for its execution. What Burke said on the subject was therefore, however ingenious, mere invective, on an assumption, not reasoning on information. Men, in that case, were evidently his objects; not measures, as he did not know what the measures were. It must be acknowledged by the greatest admirers of Burke, that his proceedings on this occasion, in conjunction with those of other members of Opposition, tended rather to thwart and embarrass Government than to support their country under its late disaster. Whether the war was right or wrong originally, ceased now to be the question. As we were involved in it, we

must either *get out of it honourably*, or *carry it on vigorously*. The surest way to *procure a good peace* was not to succumb under misfortune, but to *redouble exertion*. During the Christmas recess subscriptions had been offered by bodies of men, for raising regiments to make up for the loss sustained at Saratoga. Burke represented these efforts as illegal and unconstitutional: illegal, because it was levying men and money without consent of parliament; unconstitutional, because such levies might be indefinite as to number, and might be employed to deprive the country of its liberties. He did not; however, prove from either statute or decision, that raising men without consent of parliament was illegal; although to have raised money without its consent, either to pay troops or for any other purpose, would have been contrary to the law and constitution. But the money here for bounties, &c. was not raised by Government, it was offered by individuals; there was no law against either individuals or bodies making a present of their own money to the King, or to whomsoever they pleased: SUCH CONTRIBUTIONS HAD BEEN USUAL IN TIMES OF EMERGENCY, and had been approved of by the most zealous supporters of the constitution.

The employment of the Indians, which had frequently, in the course of this session, excited the severe animadversions and pathetic lamentations of Burke, was on February 6, 1778,

made by him the subject of a regular motion. In his introductory speech he took a wide view of the state and manners of the Indian savages: he argued, that in cruelty they exceeded any barbarians recorded either in ancient or modern history; and after a particular detail rose to a general survey of savage life, sentiments, and actions. The infliction of individual pain, he said, more than the political annoyance of enemies, was their object; that therefore their mode of hostility was not conducive to the purposes of civilized nations engaged in war, which are not torment, but reduction and pacification. The Indian tribes had formerly, he observed, been, relatively to either the British or French settled in their neighbourhood, powerful states: that then it was necessary to be on terms of amity with them, but that now their numbers were reduced, and the necessity to their neighbours of seeking their alliance no longer existed; and nothing but necessity could excuse the employment of so savage warriors. To the purposes of conquest or coercion they were generally inefficacious, whatever personal torment they might inflict. If extermination were the object, the Indians would do all they could to exterminate, by massacring man, woman, and child; but their barbarities would only be carried to districts on their own frontiers, and as to the whole colonies would be impotent. The consequence of employing them was par-

tial butchery, without answering any general end : though they might accompany our forces whilst successful, in hopes of plunder and butchery, they would immediately desert them on the appearance of danger, as they had done Burgoyne. He reprobated the employment of the Indians also as a measure of œconomy. He maintained, that even were their mode of warfare unexceptionable in other respects, the service did not nearly repay the expence ; all that they did to annoy the enemy might have been done by regulars. The barbarities of the Indians must widen the breach between Britain and the colonies. He reprobated, at the same time, an attempt that had been made by Government to excite an insurrection in the southern colonies, of negro slaves against their masters, as equally barbarous and impolitic. The Virginians were so enraged at this attempt that they declared, if all the other colonies should submit, they would not, to the instigators of treachery and barbarity. He concluded, that the only remedy for the alienation of affections, and the distrust and terror of our own Government, which had been brought on by their inhuman measures, was for parliament to inquire seriously and strictly into them ; and, by the most marked and public disapprobation, to convince the world that they had no share in practices which were not more disgraceful to a great and civilized nation, than they were

contrary to all true policy, and repugnant to all the feelings of humanity : for, that it was not in human nature for any people to place a confidence in those, to whom they attributed such unparalleled sufferings and miseries ; and the colonies would never be brought to believe, that those who were capable of carrying on a war in so cruel and dishonourable a manner, could be depended on for a sound, equitable, and cordial peace ; much less, that they could be safely entrusted with power and dominion.

Ministers endeavoured to prove, that unless Britain had employed the Indians, America would have engaged them ; but brought no proof to maintain this assertion.

A set of motions was now proposed, in which Mr. Fox took the lead, for an inquiry into the state of the forces in America, from the commencement of the war, and the losses sustained. His object was, to shew that the men and money employed in the contest had been thrown away, and that the coercion of America was unattainable. This proposal was opposed by Administration, on the ground that it would be imprudent to expose the number of our forces. Mr. Fox asserted, that twenty thousand men had perished in the contest. The Minister answered, that not more than twelve hundred *had been slain*. Mr. Fox, always ready in directly applying the just criterion when truth was his object, moved for an account of all the men

sent to America, all that still remained, and that the difference would be the loss sustained. Particular inquiry was deemed by the friends of Administration inexpedient. Similar motions were made in the upper house, and rejected. The great Earl of Chatham, notwithstanding his bodily infirmities, took an active share in the business of this session, the last which that illustrious statesman lived to see.

February 17, Lord North proposed a conciliatory plan, which afforded much discussion to Burke and other leading members of Opposition. He defended his own plans and conduct respecting America. He asserted, that it had always been his opinion, that the taxation of America could never produce a beneficial revenue to Britain. He had wished to keep the discussion of American taxation as much as possible out of parliament. To lessen the complaints of the Americans he had proposed, in 1770, the taking off all the duties but that on tea; and that, in proposing the East India Company should export their teas duty free, he had meant the relief of that Company in such a way as would accommodate the Americans, by affording them tea at a cheaper rate, instead of being a ground of complaint; that the coercion acts were the effects of necessity, not of his inclination; and that the war which afterwards ensued had arisen from the Americans and their abettors. The events of the war, he said, had

turned out quite different from what the country had reason to expect; and that to the event, and not his well grounded expectations, he must make his plan conform. He proposed two bills, one for declaring the intentions of Great Britain concerning the exercise of the right of taxing the colonies, and, in fact, renouncing the exercise of the right; another for appointing commissioners, with full powers to treat with America. The great defect of Lord North was want of firmness. With an excellent understanding and upright intentions, he too readily sacrificed his own opinion to that of others; there was in his conduct a defect very pernicious either to the public or private manager of important business, *he was too easily born down by opposition to what he himself thought right.* This was very evident in his parliamentary conduct, and it is not unfair to conclude, that it took place sometimes in the cabinet. The more determined abettors of coercive measures were confounded at the proposed abandonment of the plans they had hitherto supported. Mr. Fox professed to approve of the general object of conciliation, and shewed that the means proposed were nearly the same as those intended by Burke in his conciliatory bill some years before. At the same time he entered into a full discussion of the ignorance and weakness which was compelled, after much loss, to propose plans,

that if adopted, when offered some years before, would have prevented that loss. Burke maintained that the terms of conciliation, however admissible they might have been at the commencement of the contest, would be now too late, as any terms would be short of independence, which, he affirmed, the Americans had now permanently established for themselves, and had, besides, entered into a treaty with France for securing. To this sound reasoning, founded on accurate information, he added argument less conclusive. He contended that no terms coming from that Administration would be received by the Americans. It is probable that the Americans, or ANY MEN OF SENSE, would consider WHAT the terms were proposed by the contending nation, not WHO were the agents. The bills, in their passage through the house, were rather the subject of regulation and modification, than of opposition. Several provisions proposed by Burke were adopted, and the whole passed without a division.

The state of the navy, now become a more important subject of discussion than during any former period of the war, as France had manifested hostile intentions, called forth the powers of Fox and Burke. In considering the navy, it appears that Burke either had been deficient in his usual information, or had argued more as a party man than as an impartial statesman.

The navy, as it appeared from the number of well appointed ships employed in various quarters, or ready to be sent to sea, was in a very respectable state. Burke asserted that no officer of character would be induced to take the command of a fleet in such a condition, an assertion in which he was totally wrong, as several officers of high reputation declared their willingness to serve, and one of the first professional respectability, highly esteemed by Burke himself, actually undertook the command of the principal fleet. To blame Administration, when really wrong, was the duty of a patriotic senator: to censure them in every case, whether wrong or right, was the part merely of an Opposition member. Burke, indeed, as we have seen in the "Thoughts on the Cause of the Discontents," avowed himself a party man, and persisted, during a great portion of his life, in that declaration. His avowal that he was so is nothing to the merit or demerit of the question; parties are right or wrong according to their object, and the means they employ. To attack not measures only, but men, whatever the measures be, though commonly practised by parties, is inconsistent with justice and truth. It is on questions of great and general policy, involving measures and not men, that we are to look for the exertions of Burke in their highest intellectual, moral, and political excellence. Fox

made a motion for an inquiry into the unfortunate expedition from Canada, the purport of which was to prove that the Minister was to blame for the disaster ; that the plan was wrong ; that Burgoyne had acted agreeably to the tenor of his instructions ; that the force afforded him was inadequate. Burke warmly supported these arguments, although he had neither oral nor written evidence, and proceeded on conjecture, a conjecture in which he was afterwards proved to be wrong, it being evinced by documents that the plan was concerted in conjunction with Burgoyne himself, and that all the force was supplied to him which he deemed necessary. Here, therefore, Burke was an advocate against the Minister instead of a judge :—a partizan instead of a senator.

The Opposition party, however unanimous in inveighing against Ministers, by no means agreed respecting the terms on which they would proffer peace to the Americans. They were ranged in two classes :—those of whom the Marquis of Rockingham was the nominal head, Fox and Burke the real ; and those of whom Chatham was the leader, assisted by Temple, Shelburne, and Camden, in the House of Lords, by Colonel Barre, Dunning, and some others, in the House of Commons. In the upper house the Chatham party prevailed ; in the lower the Rockingham. Lord Chatham was utterly inimical to the independence of Ame-

rica : Burke and Fox considered it as unavoidable. In the upper house the principal supporter of that part of Opposition was the Duke of Richmond. Chatham, and the members who joined with him, thought the independence of America the greatest of all possible national evils : Burke and Fox admitted the independence of America to be a great evil, but not to be avoided, without incurring a greater, in the continuance of hostilities, with the addition of a French war ; and that even after all our enormous expence of blood and treasure, its acknowledgement must be ultimately made. There were some other points in which the different members of Opposition disagreed. Burke and the Rockingham party were inimical to reform in parliament : Chatham, Shelburne, Dunning, and Camden, were for a reform. Fox and the Duke of Richmond, though they concurred with Burke on the subject of American independence, coincided with Chatham as to reform in parliament. But though these great men agreed that some change was necessary, they by no means proposed the same specific object and plans. The Duke of Richmond's scheme of universal suffrage and annual parliaments would have been the greatest deviation from the constitution of Britain : a scheme arising from theoretical views of possible perfection in mankind, and not from the contemplation of their actual history and conduct.

Towards the close of this session, application was made to parliament in favour of Ireland, to relieve that country from sundry unjust and injudicious restraints respecting their manufactures and trade. These restraints had injured Ireland, it was alledged, without serving Britain. The Irish had been hindered from manufacturing their own wool, in order to favour the woollen manufactory of England. The consequence of this was, that Irish wool was smuggled over into France; to the great detriment of British manufactures, as with such materials France was able to rival this island. The bills were intended to relieve Ireland, and promote her trade and manufactures, without injuring those of this country. Burke was the great and powerful supporter of the bills. On this subject he displayed an amazing extent of commercial knowledge; he went over the manufactures and trade of the two kingdoms, with the contributions of each to support Government; not their actual state only, but their history and principles. His speech alone was sufficient to convey to any man of understanding, unacquainted with the relative commerce of England and Ireland, and the absolute and relative commerce of Ireland, a complete knowledge of the subject. Indeed, whatever speech Burke made on a new question, exhibited a full view of the matter in discussion, in all its various relations. One circumstance placed him

in a very delicate and embarrassing situation. His constituents of Bristol apprehended that their interest would be affected by the bills in favour of Ireland, supported by their representative. They intimated their opinion to him, probably expecting that the intimation might induce him to withdraw his support of the bills. Burke was convinced that the bills were generally equitable as to Britain and Ireland; not impolitical to Britain, and not injurious even to Bristol. It came to be the question whether he would follow the voice of his constituents, or the voice of his conscience. The lesser obligation he made give way to the greater; and though he anticipated rejection at a future poll for Bristol, continued to support the laws which he judged to be right.

After much discussion, in which the supporters had the advantage, it was agreed by both parties to defer the main business until the next session of parliament. The opposers gave way to some enlargements with regard to Irish trade, from which its supporters hoped that, by allowing them another session before its final determination, they might become well disposed to promote some more of the propositions.

May 1st, a bill was proposed for excluding contractors from sitting in parliament. The reasons for such an exclusion appeared to be so very obvious, that even the ingenuity of Burke brought little novelty of argument. So

near were he and his friends to carrying this question, that they lost it by a majority of two voices only, 113 to 115.

A bill, moved by Sir George Saville for repealing certain penalties and disabilities to which Roman Catholics were subject, was vigorously promoted by Burke. He went on the ground that no penalties for difference of religion should be in force after the cause of their enactment had ceased: that restraints, which were judicious and even necessary at the time of their imposition, in order to secure the Protestant religion, were now totally useless: what was then defence, was now persecution; a principle entirely inconsistent with rational religion. The bill passed with unanimous approbation. Burke's support of this liberal bill also added to the displeasure his constituents at Bristol had conceived against him on account of his speeches in favour of Ireland.

General Burgoyne had now returned from America on his parole. He soon found that he was no longer an object of court favour, or of ministerial countenance. When the principal personages withdrew their regard, others followed their example. He applied for a court-martial, which was refused him, on the ground that, whilst a prisoner, his preceding conduct was not cognizable by any court in this country. There, it appears, Government was right, because a court-martial's sentence, if unfavourable,

might be ineffectual ; as the infliction of either confinement or death on a prisoner belonging to the enemy, would be injustice to the enemy, by whose courtesy only the prisoner was in this country.

Fox and Burke very warmly embraced the cause of the General, with an eagerness, indeed, that outwent cognizance of its merits. Burgoyne solicited parliamentary inquiry. This the American Minister declared could not be granted until after a military investigation, then impracticable, and adduced apposite precedents to justify the refusal. The discussion, after much altercation, and very bitter invective against the Minister by Fox and Burke, was postponed. The last acts of that session were testimonies to the extraordinary merits and services of the illustrious Chatham, recently deceased.

This year Sir William Howe asked permission to resign his command, alledging that he had not enjoyed the confidence and support of Ministry in such a way as to answer the purposes of his commission. The desired leave was granted ; and Sir Henry Clinton was appointed in his place. The justice of his allegations respecting confidence and support was a subject afterwards of a parliamentary inquiry, which ended in such a manner as to leave the case doubtful.

France, as Burke had often predicted, took

an open part in the contest with America. If we consider this junction with its consequences, it was a very important epoch even to the history of Burke; as it generated, or rather fostered those principles which have since produced effects, that called forth the full exertion of his extraordinary powers.

The account given of the commencement of the naval war in the Annual Register of 1779, carries with it internal evidence of having been written by Burke: it is a very able account, and it leans to the side of Admiral Keppel. Besides its general ability, it bears some peculiar marks of his pen: many parts of the account are rather ratiocinative than narrative, the production of one that wished to throw blame on the Ministry and to praise the Admiral, rather than of one who merely stated facts, indifferent to whom either approbation or censure should attach. It endeavours to prove, that the First Lord of the Admiralty had been negligent, and had not provided a sufficient force to cope with that of the French. The reasoning on that subject is nearly the same as Burke often used in the house; the answer to it was the actual state of the navy, the many ships, well manned and equipped, sent to various parts of the globe.

The commissioners sent to America were not successful; their secretary, the celebrated Dr. Fergusson, was refused a passport to the con-

gress. The congress, as before, would receive no overtures, unless their independence was previously acknowledged: this Burke had foreseen ; and it required much less ability than he possessed, to foresee that terms not essentially different from those offered by the Howes, when the British armament was in unimpaired force, and America without an ally, would not be received by her, elated with the capture of Burgoyne's army, and strengthened by an alliance with France.

This campaign was on the whole disastrous. The elements seemed to have combined with the enemy in annoying the British fleet on the American seas. On the European, the issue of a battle was not altogether such as the Ministry and indeed the nation expected, and afterwards thought it might have been. The consideration of that action, and its consequences, occupied much of the attention of Burke during the following session. The speech from the throne, though it did not express, implied a censure on the operations of the campaign ; it asserted, that our arms had not been attended with the success which the vigour of our exertions promised. Burke imputed the failure to the inferiority of our fleets and the tardiness of our preparations. The conciliatory propositions, he contended, met with the issue which he expected, and all men might expect. The valedictory manifesto of the commissioners was

strongly censured by Burke. This manifesto, the political reader will remember, declared, that if the Americans did not accede to terms of conciliation, and adhered to the alliance of France, the British would change the nature of the war, and do every thing possible to render America an useless accession. Burke inveighed against this declaration as contrary to the principles of humanity and civilized society; that if a system of desolation was begun by us, it would be retorted by the Americans, and so a horrible addition be made to the usual calamities of war. Besides, he said, that threats of devastation and destruction from those, who manifestly were not now superior in force, were idle and vain. It shewed a wish for barbarity, without the means of being effectually barbarous. It was requested that the manifesto should be disavowed by Administration; and a motion was made for an address to his Majesty, expressing the disapprobation of the House of Commons. This motion was negatived.

The action of the 27th of July now became the subject of parliamentary discussion. Sir Hugh Palliser had published a letter in a morning paper, containing a statement of the particulars of the engagement, and replete with indirect insinuation and direct censure against the conduct of Admiral Keppel. Keppel declared, that unless this letter was disavowed, he would accept of no command under which

Palliser was to be employed. Palliser, in the house, charged Keppel, in whose praises he before had been lavish, with misconduct and incapacity, and applied to the Admiralty for a court-martial on the Commander in Chief. This was readily granted, and Keppel was honourably acquitted. *

Great dissensions in the navy were the consequence of the dispute between the two Admirals. One party blamed Palliser for his proceedings against the Commander in Chief, another censured Keppel for losing an advantageous opportunity, by an unnecessary apprehension of the dangers of a *lee shore*.

One of the judges, Captain Duncan, when afterwards elevated to a situation in which his wisdom, skill, and vigour could fully operate, has demonstrated, to the complete satisfaction of both friends and enemies, that an Admiral may gain a signal victory, though very near a LEE SHORE.

Fox and Burke endeavoured to prove, that the fleet had been so inferior to what was requisite, as to manifest great neglect of duty in the First Lord of the Admiralty. A motion was made, to censure Lord Sandwich and his colleagues in office. Here Burke, as on many

* This trial, of great consequence in itself, derived an adventitious importance, from its having afforded the first opportunity of a display of his powers to the greatest judicial speaker of modern times.

questions respecting the conduct of Ministry, was a mere party man, not a philosophical politician. No facts were adduced to justify the censure. Had Burke been, on every question, the impartial philosopher, he certainly would have been a still greater character. Impartiality, however, was not to be expected from the ablest of men, with so very violent passions, in a situation tending so much to inflame passion. Unconnected with party politics, in the calm investigation of the closet, his extraordinary genius must have been a more constant agent of wisdom than when so often biassed by party contentions.

A question now occurred, not of ministerial conduct, but of national policy, on a subject that had been partly discussed the preceding session, respecting the trade of Ireland. Burke took a very active part in endeavouring to procure to his native country that relief which she wanted, and which it was just and politic she should receive. The Minister for some time did not interfere in the business, but finding a great clamour excited against the propositions by the British traders and manufacturers whose particular interests they would affect, he at last opposed them, and they were negatived by a small majority.

About this period Burke was defendant in a Chancery suit, in which Lord Verney was plaintiff. It was alledged by Lord Verney, that

Burke, his brother, and cousin, had been engaged with him in a stock-jobbing speculation, by which very great loss had been incurred; that Lord Verney was the ostensible man, and had been obliged to make out the engagements; that Edmund Burke being the only one of the rest, who had any property, Verney had applied to him to defray his share of the debt. On refusal, he filed a bill against him in Chancery, claiming Burke as his partner. Burke making affidavit that he was not, the matter was, of course, concluded in Burke's favour. A great clamour arose against Burke for clearing himself in this manner: but a positive oath of a man of character is certainly better evidence than vague rumour.

The Roman Catholic bill which had passed during the preceding session, had excited great alarms in Scotland, as it was supposed to be the intention of parliament to extend the relief to Scotch Catholics. Not the common people alone, but many of the gentry and clergy, and of the latter not the ignorant enthusiastic only, but some of the liberal and learned, considered the proposed relief as an introduction to popery. The press teemed with publications describing the errors of popery, and imputing to that mode of faith, even at that time, all the hurtful principles which sprang from it in the days of ignorance. Associations were formed to oppose popery, by mechanics and manufacturers in Glasgow, Edinburgh, and other

towns ; the weavers of Renfrew and Paisley displaying a peculiar zeal against the doctrines of Antichrist. The puritanical papaphobia was again becoming epidemical. The populace was inflamed, and rose to tumult and riot in various places. At Edinburgh, a party of those enlightened theologians, the Leith sailors, took the lead in stirring up vengeance against the enemies of that religion, for the knowledge and practice of which they were themselves so eminently distinguished. Assisted by many other divines, they set fire to chapels, and houses of the papists. The Roman Catholic sufferers applied to Burke to present a petition to parliament, praying for a compensation on account of the losses they had sustained. Some of the Scotch had been absurd enough to approve of the fanatical outrages, on the ground that it was proper for the people spiritedly to manifest their hatred of popery. That Burke ridiculed with great humour, considering so despicable reasoning as unworthy of a serious refutation. He also attacked very strongly the supineness of Government, to which he imputed the mad violence of the populace.

It happened, at that time, that the Prime Minister was indulging himself in a profound nap. "I hope," said Burke, "Government is not dead, but asleep:" pointing to Lord North, "Brother Lazarus is not dead, only *sleep, etib.*" The laugh upon this occasion was not more loud on one side of the house, than it ap-

peared to be relished on the other. Even the noble Lord, alluded to on the occasion, seemed to enjoy the allusion as heartily as the rest of the house, as soon as he was sufficiently awake to conceive the cause of the universal joke.

Burke took a very active part in a motion made by Fox for the removal of Lord Sandwich. Great dissensions had taken place in the navy, in consequence of the resignation of Lord Howe and Admiral Keppel, both of which were imputed to the want of capacity, negligence, or improper partiality of the First Lord of the Admiralty. He, it was said, had neglected to reinforce the fleet of Lord Howe, when the fate of our navy and army in America depended on the command of the seas. He had furnished Keppel with an inadequate force for the object of his cruize. After the Admiral had distinguished himself by his conduct in the engagement with the French, he had patronized and supported the Vice-Admiral in his attack; an attack that was declared by a court-martial false, slanderous, and malicious. Fox *assuming* these grounds of partiality, negligence, and misconduct, drew a conclusion very fair, *if he had established his premises*, that he ought to be removed from his office. Burke pointed, with all the powers of ridicule and ingenuity, what he contended to be error, incapacity, negligence, and treachery in Lord Sandwich, but did not adduce proofs. When men of so astonishing force of reasoning

as Burke and Fox proceed upon assumptions, a reader fairly concludes that it is from their wishes, not their conviction that they speak. During no period had Britain so many difficulties to encounter as under the administration of Lord Sandwich, yet did her fleets maintain the dominion of the sea against a combination of force unprecedented in history. He could not be a bad First Lord of the Admiralty, who had fleets ready to withstand the combined power of America, Holland, Spain, and France, and to vanquish the two most powerful of these nations. It was not proved that the little impression made on the enemy in the commencement of the war was owing to a deficiency in force. The reasoning, therefore, of Burke and Fox was inconclusive. It afterwards appeared, that the opinion they professed to entertain respecting Lord Sandwich's ability and skill was wrong. In fact, it was manifest that he was able, skilful, and attentive enough in the management of our navy, to enable us to make extraordinary efforts. The violent speeches of Burke tended to inflame instead of allaying the dissensions in the navy: a very dangerous tendency at any time, especially when we were engaged in so formidable a war.

The conduct of the Howes next came to be a subject of parliamentary inquiry. It as publicly alledged by the friends of Ministry, that much more might have been done towards

the subjugation of America. It was even confidently asserted that General Howe might have repeatedly ended the war, had he followed up his successes at Long Island, White Plains, the Brandy Wine, and German Town. He had complained of want of confidence and support from Administration. Lord George Germain proved that he had furnished him with thirty thousand men, whereas General Howe said nineteen thousand were sufficient. As to confidence, so great was the trust reposed in him, that the military plans and measures were left to himself.* In 1777 the British troops amounted to forty-onethousand, and the American to twenty-three. It must, therefore, either have been something in the war itself which rendered success unattainable, in his mode of carrying it on, and not the alledged want of support and confidence from the Ministry that obstructed his exertions. It was generally reported, and never contradicted, that dissipation of every species prevailed in the army while under his command. That certainly was not the most effectual mode of subjugating America. In this case, the most partial admirers of Burke must acknowledge that he acted as a party man, as determined to throw blame on Ministers, whether they were or were not blameable. He and

* See Stedman's History, vol. i. near the end.

Mr. Fox pressed urgently for an inquiry into the conduct of the Howes. The Ministers declared that they had no share in any attack upon their character, ("Whatever," said Lord North, "our opinion may be in certain matters") and thought an inquiry unnecessary, but did not oppose its institution. It evidently appeared, that although the vindication of the General was the ostensible object of the inquirers, the condemnation of Ministry was the real. Many of the questions that were put did not respect the Commander in Chief. Those interrogatories that were relative to him, rather regarded his general character and conduct than special proceedings. The answers of the evidences called by Howe were more in the style of general eulogium than of special exculpation. Ministry seeing that Burke and the other Opposition members were partial in their interrogatories, called in witnesses on the other side. General Robertson and Mr. Galway gave a circumstantial, particular narrative, that by no means coincided with the opinion which Burke and Fox entertained or professed to entertain. The Opposition members, after hearing the evidence of General Robertson and Mr. Galway, moved to dissolve the committee, which was accordingly done ; and so ended the inquiry.

We cannot, consistently with impartiality, credit patriotism, or indeed justice, with the

carrying on an inquiry whilst it appeared to tend to one object, and when it appeared to tend to another, propose its abandonment. On the other hand, it may be observed, that if Ministers could establish proof of misconduct or neglect in General Howe, it was their duty to bring forward that proof. As no evidence has been adduced to substantiate the charges against the General, no person is warranted in imputing to him negligence or any other defect in his military conduct. The inquiry included General Burgoyne. Nothing came out, tending to impeach his military character. He had been unfortunate ; but there was no evidence that he had failed either in prosecuting advantage, or in exerting himself to ward off calamity.

A hostile manifesto from Spain, declaratory of its intention to join in the war, verified a prediction of Burke respecting the many bad consequences from the rupture with America. At the time that he resumed his just disapprobation of measures so hurtful to the country, he attacked men with less reasonable grounds. He charged Lord Sandwich with being the immediate cause of the Spanish war, by not having, in the preceding campaign, furnished the Admiral with a sufficient force to conquer the French navy. Here he again censured the Minister without substantiating the grounds.

A bill was proposed in the house to take away, for a limited time, certain exemptions from being pressed into the navy, a bill that necessity alone certainly could justify; but that, when we were on the eve of being engaged in an additional war to those by which we were already so much annoyed, it appeared necessity did justify. The preservation of the constitution was Burke's principal object. Not admitting the necessity, he strenuously opposed such an infringement on personal liberty. This session continued to an unusual length, but ended in July.

During this campaign affairs wore a very unfavourable aspect. The combined fleets of France and Spain advanced to the channel; and the British fleet found it prudent to retire, in order to take advantage of the narrows. The campaign in America was attended with various success; but Britain was far from advancing in the object of the contest. The national expenditure was increasing in a most enormous degree. Still, however, she externally made a gallant stand, distressed and almost destroyed the commerce of the enemy. Her naval exertions, in various parts of the globe, were such as shewed that the First Lord of the Admiralty had not been deficient in official service, and that the attacks of Fox and Burke proceeded from the spirit of party, and did not arise from that enlarged patriotism which both these per-

sonages frequently displayed. The misfortunes of Britain by no means excited that dissatisfaction which Opposition seemed to expect. Now that the nation was engaged in a war with her ancient enemies, many even of those who had disapproved of coercive measures respecting America, no longer regarded the Provincials as oppressed fellow subjects but as the allies of foes. In Britain, therefore, there were fewer out of parliament in opposition to Government than during the first years of the contest. The commerce and manufactures of this country had not suffered so much as had been anticipated: besides, the war found employment for a great multitude of people. The fortunes which certain persons obtained by it, together with the advantages that were held out to moneyed men, in subscribing to the public loans, occasioned a facility in raising supplies, which was extremely favourable to the measures of Government, and lessened the general discernment of the calamities and dangers of the nation. But though either private interest, national animosity, or genuine patriotism made the greater number of the British satisfied with the measures of Government, very great discontents prevailed in Ireland, because the grievances under which they laboured, and to redress which Burke had endeavoured with such ability, had continued unremoved. At last it appeared that the Minister had determined

to attend to the complaints of the sister kingdom. In his Majesty's speech Ireland was recommended to the particular attention of parliament, to consider what benefits and advantages might be extended to that kingdom.

Burke's attention was this session directed principally to the affairs of Ireland, and to public œconomy. He censured Ministers for not having taken effectual steps to give satisfaction to the Irish nation, in conformity to the address of parliament. The discontents in that kingdom he imputed to Ministry, and considered as more dangerous than they really were and eventually proved. Whatever subject occupied the attention of Burke, made a very deep impression on his mind. In viewing it in the various lights which his versatile genius could apply to it, it often so worked upon his imagination, as to transport him far beyond the bounds which much less than his extraordinary judgment might see to be prudent. In enumerating the discontents and disorders of Ireland, which he imputed to the misconduct of Ministry, his vivid and fertile imagination magnified them so much, that one who estimated the condition of that country by his speech, might have supposed it to be in a state of insurrection. He contended that Ministry were restrained by fear only from pursuing the same measures respecting Ireland as they had done concerning America.

The greatest admirers of Burke must acknowledge this was not the way to cement matters. “ Why (says he) have not the Ministry adopted the same measures respecting Ireland as they did respecting America? Why have they not treated Dublin as they treated Boston? Why have they not shut up the port of Dublin, burnt Cork, reduced Waterford to ashes? Why have they not prohibited all popular meetings in that kingdom, and destroyed all popular elections? Why have they not altered the usual mode of striking juries as was done by the Massachusetts Bay charter bill? Why were not the Dublin rioters brought over to this country to be tried by an English jury? Why were not the principal leaders of the Irish armed associations proscribed, and the whole kingdom declared to be in rebellion? The answer was plain and direct; the Ministry dare not.” This passage (extracted from the Annual Register of 1780, p. 26) is a striking instance of what I have had repeatedly occasion, from the impartiality due to narration, to mention, that when Burke attacked Ministers, he often acted the part of a violent partizan. Here, his zeal to criminate them led him to the most inflammatory eloquence. If the Irish were, as in another part of the speech he asserts, disposed to insurrection, the persuasion, which it was the object of his speech to give them, that the British Government was

inclined to employ coercive measures, but restrained by fear, was not a likely mode to prevent insurrection. This much less wisdom than Burke's could have seen, if his heat at the time had not prevented reflection. In speaking of the general incapacity of Ministers, and its effects in reducing the power and glory of Britain, and imputing the employment of these Ministers to the influence of secret advisers, he compared them to the mistresses of Lewis XIV. The counsellors of Lewis finding they could not totally conquer the King's passion for the fair sex, selected the old and plainest women they could find, in order to correct, if not totally subdue, the lusts of the flesh. This, he said, as a political simile, was justly applicable to the King. His counsellors had managed so dexterously as to keep a set of Ministers about him, extremely well calculated to subdue his ambition, and, by a loss of a considerable part of his territories, to banish from his breast the lust of power and dominion.

Lord North proposed a system of regulations tending to give to Ireland the benefit of a free trade. Burke, though often transported by the warmth of his temper into too great violence of invective against the Minister, yet, from the liberality of his enlightened mind, was not wanting in doing him justice, when his measures appeared to him beneficial

and his conduct meritorious. He approved of the regulations respecting Ireland, if they should be agreeable to that country. They were received with great gratitude and applause by the Irish, who censured the English Opposition for giving only a silent acquiescence to the resolutions, instead of supporting them by the force of their eloquence.

Burke wrote a letter to his friends in Ireland, in vindication of his own conduct. He represented, that "till the Minister had been driven to some serious attention to the affairs of Ireland, by the measures adopted in that kingdom, his conduct had been extremely dilatory, indecisive, and equivocal: and that the minority were justly incensed at him for having so grossly sacrificed the honour of the nation and the dignity of parliament, as to refuse to afford any substantial relief to the Irish nation, till their own spirited exertions had made every thing that could be done by Great Britain to gratify them appear not an act of choice, but of necessity."

Among various subjects of attack against the conduct of Administration, the waste of public money was one of the most important. Although Lord North's individual integrity has never been impeached; although it never has been alledged that there was any defalcation of national treasure for his own use; it is certain that many of those employed under him made

so immense fortunes as implied MORE OF PUBLIC MONEY GIVEN THAN OF PUBLIC SERVICE DONE. Besides the actual servants of Government, those who had contracts with it had much greater profits than would have arisen from a fair competition. Certain contractors were allowed terms much more advantageous than those on which others would have supplied the requisite articles equally well. Burke reprobated this profusion, both as an unnecessary, and consequently unjust expenditure of the people's money, and as a source of corrupt influence to the crown. The waste and the influence he considered as mutually acting and re-acting on each other: that as the waste increased influence, so the influence increased the facility of waste. He had, very strenuously, in a preceding session, supported a motion for excluding contractors from a seat in the house. He now took a general review not only of the expenditure of the public revenue by the Ministers of the time, but of the general establishments, considering the various places in detail, to ascertain their public utility. After enlarging on the topics, and entering into a history and discussion of finance in other countries, he gave notice, that after the Christmas holidays he should propose a plan for the reduction of the public expenditure.

The very enormous expence of our establishments from the war, and from waste

continuing to increase, the imposts began to be severely felt in the nation. The subject now awakened the attention both of the inhabitants of the metropolis and of the different counties in the kingdom. Yorkshire and London, the chief county and the chief city of the kingdom, the principal districts of landed and of monied property, took the lead in expressing alarm from an expenditure by which they were so much affected. The city of London and the county of York each petitioned the House of Commons to adopt some plan for the reduction of expence. Other cities, counties, and towns followed this example, and established a committee of correspondence for promoting the common cause. The eyes of all were anxiously turned towards Burke, all expected his plan of reform.

On the 11th of February, 1780, he communicated to the House of Commons his "plan of reform in the constitution of several parts of the public œconomy." This speech is replete with financial principle, accurate information as to the detail of establishments, their object and use, and embellished with all the beauties of eloquence. It is the speech of wisdom, selecting from the stores of knowledge what might be practically beneficial. The orations of Burke, especially those on great and comprehensive questions, abound in general observations, drawn from the most profound philo-

sophy ; which have the double merit of being in their place specially applicable to the object in consideration, and to a variety of other situations and circumstances in the conduct of life. From his speeches and writings might be formed a collection of moral and political maxims of the strictest truth and highest importance, but which are not introduced in an abstract form; they are made to bear immediately upon the case. On the principles of national revenue he displays an enlarged view of the subject, which shews a mind capable of writing a treatise on the nature and causes of the wealth of nations. Nor could Smith himself, whose penetrating, investigating, and generalizing mind the details and principles of finance so much and so long occupied, have displayed more complete knowledge and philosophical views than this speech of Burke, who attended to revenue, among a multiplicity of momentous objects. At the same time so minute is his acquaintance with offices, that he appears fit to have composed a court calendar without copying from the red-book. His introduction is, perhaps, one of the most masterly that ever served to usher in a piece of eloquence. In that part in which he speaks of the difficulties he must encounter in conducting a plan of reform, a reform bearing on private interest and lessening private emolument, he is peculiarly excellent. What he says applied precisely to

that individual case, and would apply in general to any situation in which it was proposed to sacrifice individual gain from donative to general good in the retrenchment of unnecessary expence. “ I feel (says he) that I engage in a business in itself most ungracious. I know that all parsimony is of a quality approaching to unkindness; and that (on some person or other) every reform must operate as a sort of punishment: indeed the whole class of the severe and restrictive virtues are at a market almost too high for humanity; what is worse, there are very few of those virtues which are not capable of being imitated, and even outdone in many of their most striking effects, by the worst of vices. Malignity and envy will carve much more deeply, and finish much more sharply, in the work of retrenchment, than frugality and providence. I do not, therefore, wonder that gentlemen have kept away from such a task, as well from good nature, as from prudence. Private feeling might, indeed, be overborne by legislative reason; and a man of long-sighted and strong nerved humanity might bring himself, not so much to consider from whom he takes a superfluous enjoyment, as for whom, in the end, he may preserve the absolute necessities of life”. He lays down certain rules of political œconomy, which he applies to the various cases he details, and to the esta-

lishments which he would retrench : considering various establishments as wasteful, because employed in a manner neither tending to reproduction or to security of what is by other means produced ; and hurtful, as the means of corruption. His principle is, that whatever establishments are either more expensive than gainful, or afford the means of corruption more than advantage to judicial and political administration, ought to be abolished. This general principle he applies to certain jurisdictions, public estates, offices, and modes of disbursement.

On jurisdictions, he proves by accurate documents and conclusive arguments, that the inferior jurisdictions of the Sovereign, attended with considerable expence, do not answer any purpose which might not be better effected without the expence of those establishments, in the supreme character of Sovereign. On this part, together with the most authentic detail, the basis of the ablest and serious reasoning, there is mixed a great degree of pleasantry and humour. Speaking of the characters with which the Sovereign is invested in different parts of South-Britain, he says, “ the monarchy is divided into five several distinct principalities, besides the supreme : as in the itinerant exhibitions of the stage, they are obliged to throw a variety of parts on their chief performer ; so our Sovereign condescends himself to act, not only the

principal but the subordinate parts.—Cross a brook, and you lose the King of England ; but you have some comfort in coming again under his Majesty, though *shorn of his beams*, and no more than Prince of Wales. Go to the north, and you find him dwindled to a Duke of Lancaster. Turn to the west of that north, and he pops upon you in the humble character of Earl of Chester. Travel a few miles on, the Earl of Chester disappears, and the King surprises you again as Count Palatine of Lancaster. You find him once more in his incognito, and he is Duke of Cornwall. So that quite fatigued and satiated with this dull variety, you are infinitely refreshed when you return to the sphere of his proper splendour, and behold your amiable Sovereign in his true, simple, undisguised, native character of Majesty.” He proposes, that as these jurisdictions are expensive, without producing public advantage, and are the means of corrupt influence, they should be abolished. He applies the same principles to the crown demesnes and the annexed offices ; but dwells most particularly on the household. Many have ridiculed the minuteness of his detail here ; but if he was right as to fact, the particularity of his attention was certainly very meritorious : whatever saving could take place, without lessening the King’s power of every constitutional exertion, was an advantage to the nation.

The following passages also shew the force and versatility of Burke's humour:—" Lord Talbot's scheme of œconomy was dashed to pieces ; his department became more expensive than ever ;—the civil list debt accumulated.— Why ? It was truly from a cause, which, though perfectly adequate to the effect, one would not have instantly guessed ;—it was because the *turnspit in the King's kitchen was a member of parliament*. The King's domestic servants were all undone ; his tradesmen remained unpaid, and became bankrupt ;—*because the turnspit of the King's kitchen was a member of parliament*. His Majesty's slumbers were interrupted, his pillow was stuffed with thorns, and his peace of mind entirely broken,—*because the King's turnspit was a member of parliament*. The judges were unpaid ; the justice of the kingdom bent and gave way ; the foreign Ministers remained inactive and unprovided ; the system of Europe was dissolved ; the chain of our alliances was broken ; all the wheels of government at home and abroad were stopped ;—*because the King's turnspit was a member of parliament*."—" The household troops form an army ; who will be ready to mutiny for want of pay, and whose mutiny will be really dreadful to a Commander in Chief. A rebellion of the thirteen Lords of the bedchamber would be far more terrible to a Minister, and would probably affect his power

more to the quick, than a revolt of thirteen colonies. What an uproar such an event would create at court! What *petitions*, and *committees*, and *associations* would it not produce! Bless me! what a clattering of white sticks and yellow sticks would be about his head!—what a storm of gold keys would fly about the ears of the Minister!—what a shower of Georges, and Thistles, and medals, and collars of S. S. would assail him at his first entrance into the antichamber, after an insolvent Christmas quarter! A tumult which could not be appeased by all the harmony of the new year's ode.”

The individuals affected by his reform (after it had fallen much short of his intention) have inveighed bitterly against Burke for diminishing their profits. That, no doubt, was a serious concern to *themselves and those interested in their prosperity*; but it could be no reason to prevent a patriot from proposing reduction of useless expence, that some had gained by it. If a man find it prudent to dismiss supernumerary footmen, or housemaids, he ought not to be deterred by the consideration, that it would be more agreeable to these persons to live upon him, though doing nothing in return. He went through offices of a higher description than those of the mere menials of the household, and proposed the reduction of various places in the civil list, in which either there was pay without

service, or where the pay greatly exceeded the service. An impartial examiner must admit the justness and comprehensiveness of Burke's general principles of political œconomy, the accuracy of his details of office, and the applicability of his principles to those details: he must acknowledge that considerable saving would have accrued to the nation from the general adoption of his plan, as indeed there did even from the partial. Their utility would have been much greater if they could be applied to infinitely more momentous departments of public expence than any within the civil list, to the ordnance, the navy, and the army. The necessary expenditure in these is so very considerable, that there is a much greater probability of waste, and opportunity of mismanagement or even intentional misapplication, than in the *comparatively* confined expenditure of the civil list. From the general political principles of Burke, together with his particular financial principles, it is probable that if he had fully succeeded in his first plan of reform, he would have afterwards extended their operation to the larger sources of expence. Ministers joined with Opposition in bestowing the highest applause, not on his eloquence only, but on his financial principles. When, however, the principles came to be applied to the particular plans of reform, they did not accede. Burke grounded four

bills on his plan, which, after much discussion, were at length rejected.

A new law was proposed this session for excluding contractors from parliament, and very ably supported by Burke, Fox, and Dunning, and passed the House of Commons. During the discussion of Burke's bill, Mr. Dunning, after enlarging very much on the influence of the crown, and endeavouring to shew that it was attended with most pernicious effects, moved the famous resolution, that "*the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished.*" This resolution was supported by Fox, Burke, and the whole force of Opposition, with such effect, that, to the surprise and alarm of Administration, and probably to the astonishment of the mover himself, it was carried by a majority of 233 to 215, and on it several other resolutions were grounded. Although this majority was of no long duration on the side of Opposition, it afforded them well grounded hopes that their warfare against the Minister would be at last successful. The country gentlemen had been so moved by the state of public affairs as described by Dunning, Fox, and Burke, that they were staggered in their opinion of Lord North; and though, after a short dereliction, they again returned to him, it was probable that the increasing burdens from the war, joined to the forcible eloquence of the

Opposition leaders, would induce them entirely to abandon Administration ; as afterwards took place. On the general ground of diminishing the influence of the crown, a bill was proposed under the auspices of Burke, for preventing revenue officers from voting at elections, but rejected by a small majority. The bill for excluding contractors was lost in the House of Lords. Whether Lord North had suffered it to pass without much opposition in the House of Commons, from either a foreknowledge or predestination of its fate in the upper house, or that he did not actually disapprove of it, I cannot determine. The exclusion of the contractors would probably, in some degree, have promoted Burke's twofold object, restriction of profusion and diminution of corruption.

A motion was made by General Conway for reconciliation with America. It proposed to remove all their just complaints, but not to acknowledge their independence. It was opposed by the Ministers, who thought it humiliating as to this nation, and ineffectual as to the object. It was very faintly supported by Burke and the Rockingham part of Opposition, who thought it totally inadequate to the objects.

Although the eminent abilities of Burke had not succeeded in procuring in parliament the desired reduction of expence, associations continued to be formed by men of talents and property, both in London and other parts of

England, the object of which was reform; an object which they expected ultimately to obtain. Meanwhile, an association for a very different purpose, and composed of very different persons, gave rise to proceedings of the most disorderly and licentious kind. A Protestant association had been formed in England, consisting of persons of nearly the same rank and character which composed that of Scotland; persons, who, though many of them were well meaning friends to the Protestant religion, were generally ignorant, and estimated Popery by its former, not its modern state; and who were for applying towards Papists that intolerant spirit which constituted one of the worst qualities of Popery during the ages of ignorant credulity and clerical usurpation. No man of liberal sentiments, of any party, had any connection with them: they consisted chiefly of persons equally low in rank with those who, in latter times, make up the bulk of the London Corresponding Society. Their object was to procure the repeal of the law of 1778. They framed a petition to parliament, to which one hundred and twenty thousand of those enlightened theologians put either their names or their marks. It was resolved, that as many of the petitioners as possible should attend at the presentation of their petition. An advertisement for that purpose, signed by Lord George Gordon, was issued. Fifty thousand, at least, assembled

with this view, June the 2d, in St. George's Fields. Thence they proceeded to the House of Commons, where their petition was presented by their president. The theologians insulted several members of both parties in parliament. A mob, whether of Protestant associators, other rabble, or both, displayed their zeal in fire-brands, and burnt several popish buildings. The outrages continued, and rapidly extended to the persons and houses of others as well as Roman Catholics. The prisons were destroyed, and their inhabitants let loose, to co-operate with the mob. London, for a week, was the scene of uproar, plunder, and conflagration; the military force only saved the city from destruction. Such are the effects of demagogues, under whatever pretence, inflaming the populace by false representations of grievances. Burke's house and his person also were threatened, as being a strong supporter of Sir George Saville's bill, and suspected to be a Roman Catholic. He was represented in some of the papers as a Jesuit in disguise; and in the print-shops he was exhibited in the dress of a Friar, trimming and fomenting the fires of Smithfield. All this vulgar calumny he treated with contempt. The nickname, Neddy St. Omers, he was constantly called, and the public actually believed that he had been brought up at that seminary, a calumny which he never thought worth confuting. He always treated common

abuse with indifference, and, perhaps, no man experienced more of it. It is worthy of observation, that through his political life he was more vehemently blamed and abused by his censurers, and more rapturously praised and even adored by his admirers, than perhaps any man that ever lived.

The effects which the riots produced on the public mind deserve notice. Previous to this period an English mob was generally considered as a test of the public opinion, the overflowing of popular energy ; and military interference was deemed highly dangerous, if not altogether unconstitutional. This seemed to be the opinion of the Duke of Newcastle when he kept a mob in pay, ready trained and disciplined, to support the then recent accession of the house of Hanover, and to suppress Tory mobs ; a mode of conduct which had a more successful, or at least a more popular effect than having recourse to military force. The Newcastle mob, as it was called, was long remembered with respect.

The conduct of the mob of 1780 destroyed for ever the credit and consequence of such a body. This has been, upon the whole, deemed very fortunate for the internal peace of the country, as it has taught Government to oppose the smallest beginnings of riot or popular commotion ; a lesson which seems peculiarly important at the present time.

Burke seemed to have adopted the sentiments of Horace, at least, with respect to a mob—

Odi profanum vulgus et arceo.

He even attended popular elections with apparent reluctance.

As soon as the peace of the metropolis was restored, and the parliament assembled as usual, Burke was indefatigable in his inquiries respecting the cause and progress of the riots, and in procuring a full recompence for all who had given in an estimate of their loss. There was no deduction made from any account of this kind, so much did the public resent the outrages which had been committed.

Notwithstanding the disgrace which was incurred by the Protestant association, and their president sent to the Tower, their committee still attended the lobby of the House of Commons, disclaiming all connection with the rioters, and praying, or rather demanding attention to their petition. Burke could not behold those gentlemen without visible marks of indignation, and was heard to say within their hearing, *I am astonished those men can have the audacity still to nose parliament!* The general panic, however, had not yet completely subsided; the parliament wishing to satisfy the association, brought in a bill by way of compromise,—to prevent Roman Catholics from teaching Protestants; a measure which was sup-

posed both conciliatory and innexious, as very few of that religion were teachers. Burke was decidedly against any law which satisfied the mob, or was likely to oppress any innocent individual: he discovered that a few persons would be affected by the proposed measure, and these he got to sign a petition, which he himself drew up, and in which he painted the proceedings of the Protestant association in very unfavourable colours. The petition was, however, supported only by eight members; and the bill having passed the Commons, was carried to the House of Lords. Burke still opposed it with all possible private opposition; he applied separately to many of the Lords, and, with his usual eloquence, represented the measure as impolitic, cruel, and absurd. Lord Thurlow, who had been lately made Chancellor, encouraged him to have the Lords petitioned, as the Commons were. This being done on the third reading, his Lordship left the woolsack, and, in a speech of great energy and eloquence, reprobated the bill so successfully as to have it rejected without a division. This was a great triumph for Burke. He told some of his friends, who praised the composition of the petition, that it should *be published in all the newspapers in England*: it never was, however, published; but a part of it, with some variations, was afterwards introduced into his famous speech to the citizens of Bristol.

The employment of the military, without being called by the civil magistrate, was certainly not a desirable measure, but at that time absolutely necessary. The lawless outrages of the mob, originating in a popular association, damped associations for the retrenchment of expence:—so inimical are democratical societies in their tendency and effects to moderate reform. No man reprobated the outrageous wickedness and madness of the mob more strongly than Burke: no man was at once a more zealous friend of constitutional liberty and a more determined enemy of popular licentiousness. As none possessed more extensive knowledge of ancient and modern history, and politics, or more wisdom to compare and estimate the tendency and effects of different governments, none could better appreciate the value of the constitution of his country. This session, in which Burke had borne so conspicuous a part, was closed on the 8th of July; and soon after, this parliament, of which he had been so active, able, and leading a member, was dissolved.

Burke finding that his support of the trade of Ireland, a support, after many difficulties, at last successful, had displeased a great part of his constituents, resolved to decline standing for Bristol. Previous to the election he made a very masterly speech, comprehending an account of the proceedings of parliament,

and the principles on which he himself had acted. In speaking of a bill which had passed in 1779, (moved by Lord Beauchamp) to prevent imprisonment for small debts, he delivered his sentiments concerning the debtor laws in general, and the general question of imprisonment for debt. " There are (he says) two capital faults in our law, with relation to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent; a presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth. Therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coerced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditor, he is to be imprisoned for life. And thus a miserable mistaken invention of artificial science operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment which the law does not inflict on very great crimes.

" The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion of an equal and a public judge; but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay interested and irritated individual. He who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party. Every idea of judicial order is subverted by this procedure.

If the insolvency be no crime, why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy and without measure?"

The opinion and sentiments of Burke on this subject coincide with that of his sage friend, Johnson, who, in his *Idler*, No. 22, maintains the injustice and impolicy of imprisonment for debt at the pleasure of the creditor. "The end (he says) of all civil regulations is to secure private happiness from private malignity; to keep individuals from the power of one another: but this end is apparently neglected, when a man, irritated with loss, is allowed to be the judge of his own cause, and to assign the punishment of his own pain; when the distinction between guilt and happiness, between casualty and design, is entrusted to eyes blind with interest, to understandings depraved by resentment."—"There can be no reason why any debtor should be imprisoned, but that he may be compelled to payment; and a term should therefore be fixed, in which the creditor should exhibit his accusation of concealed property. If such property can be discovered, let it be given to the creditor; if the charge is not offered, or cannot be proved, let the prisoner be dismissed." These are the opinions of two very great men on this subject. Perhaps it may be thought that they consider the debtor too much, and the creditor too little.

Were a mitigation of confinement compatible with the security of property, were it practicable to compel, in every case, the debtor to give up his effects to the creditor, as from effects, not person, his reimbursement must proceed, confinement might appear no longer to answer any just purpose to the creditor. The creditor would then lose nothing, and the labour of the debtor be restored to society. If a diminution of misery be consistent with the recovery of right, if the debtor may be relieved and the creditor not incur loss, we may expect it from the humanity, knowledge, and discrimination of that learned, able, and benevolent nobleman who has undertaken the cause of the unfortunate. In speaking of prisons, Burke takes occasion to bestow a very just and very eloquent encomium on the philanthropic Howard. "I cannot name Mr. Howard without remarking, that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe, not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples ; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern art ; not to collect medals, or collate manuscripts ; but to dive into the depth of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain, to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depres-

sion, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original, and it is full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country; I hope he will anticipate his final reward, by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own. He will receive not by retail, but in gross, the reward of those who visit the prisoner; and he has so forestalled and monopolized this branch of charity, that there will be, I trust, little room to merit by such acts of benevolence hereafter."

During the year 1780, affairs in America, and indeed in Europe, wore a more favourable appearance to Britain. Charlestown and the whole province of South Carolina was reduced; and the British forces made every exertion that courage and conduct could produce. Still, however, the Americans exhibited no signs of submission. The authority of Britain was acknowledged in no part, but those occupied by her forces. A hatred of the mother country was generally prevalent throughout the colonies. In Europe, Admiral Rodney had, by a signal victory over the Spanish fleet, displayed the valour and superior skill of the British navy. He led his victorious fleet to the

West Indies, and there maintained the pre-eminence of our fleets by considerable advantages, a prelude to a decisive victory, equalling any in the former annals of British glory, though since equalled by the victories of the present war, of the present year, and of the present month.* The efforts of Rodney could not have been successful, but with a force that shewed that the First Lord of the Admiralty was not inattentive to his duty, and that Burke, in his imputation of negligence and incapacity to Lord Sandwich, was a party speaker, not an impartial thinker.

From the commencement of the American war, Holland had leaned to the colonies, and had supplied them with stores. After France and Spain had become hostile to Britain, she had also supplied those nations with warlike stores, contrary to the general principles of neutrality and particular treaties subsisting between her and Britain. Various remonstrances on this subject had been made to the Dutch, which were disregarded. The Ministry, therefore, resolving to imitate the example of the illustrious Pitt during the former war, gave orders for the seizure of ships laden with contraband goods. This order was rigorously executed; the Dutch ships were searched, and contraband articles

* Written Oct. 19, 1797.

taken from them ; the full value being paid to to the owners. The Dutch, very unreasonably, complained of this proceeding. The British seeing them hostilely inclined, in order to put their disposition to the test, demanded succours stipulated by treaty. To this the States General returned no satisfactory answer. It appeared evident that Holland had determined to abandon Britain, and join her enemies. The northern powers entered into an association for promoting a scheme that altered the received law of nations concerning the right of neutral states to carry naval stores to the belligerent powers, and notified to the states at war, that they had prepared an armed force for protecting every species of neutral trade. It was evident to every one acquainted with the maritime power and situation of the several nations, that this plan, ostensibly impartial, was really meant to injure Britain. Thus, from Norway to Spain, the naval powers were either avowedly hostile, or really inimical to Great Britain. All Europe seemed to have combined to pull down her naval power. Such a situation, though alarming, was not without its use. It had a tendency to STIMULATE THE EXERTIONS OF EVERY TRUE LOVER OF HIS COUNTRY, AND TO SACRIFICE NARROWNESS OF PARTY SPIRIT TO GENUINE PATRIOTISM. The question was not now, were or were we not right in attempting to impose taxes on America, but what were the most efficacious

means for defending ourselves against so formidable a combination? Those were to be considered as true patriots, not who declaimed most fluently against the war, but who endeavoured to find out the most efficacious measures for national vigour, as the only means of peace. Out of parliament; disapprobation of the individual Ministers was in many absorbed in their wishes to support Government in general.

On February 19th, 1781, Burke revived his plan of œconomy, in hopes of better success than he had experienced the preceding session. He supported his motion by a speech necessarily consisting, as the subject was the same, of many arguments similar to those which he had used the year before; but there was a great accession of new reasoning, new imagery, new illustrations, which the extent of his knowledge and fertility of his invention never failed to throw on any subject, however much it might to other orators appear exhausted.

A circumstance distinct from the intrinsic merit of the question rendered it at this time remarkable: on it WILLIAM PITT made his first speech in the House of Commons.

Mr. Pitt was now in the twenty-second year of his age, when he entered parliament, with the expectations of all ranks and parties highly excited in his favour. It was publicly known that the illustrious Earl of Chatham had conceived

the highest opinion of the talents and acquirements of his second son. William had been educated and formed under the eye of that eminent statesman, who, oppressed with bodily infirmities, immersed in public business, and loaded with years, with the most earnest anxiety and delight tutored and directed the opening understanding of his favourite son. From his earliest age the youth had given the most undoubted proofs of intellectual vigour. A regular, judicious, and persevering application did justice to his great powers. After he had acquired a considerable share of classical literature, he applied himself sedulously to mathematical studies. This branch of learning was probably instrumental in forming his masculine understanding to the precision of thought and closeness of argument which distinguish his speeches. He was sent to an university, of which the exercises have a peculiar tendency to sharpen, invigorate, methodize, and expand the mind; and soon impressed both the scholars and masters of Cambridge with an idea of the superior figure he was destined to make. Devoting himself to the studies most prevalent at his college, more, as Burke had done at Dublin; for the sake of acquirement than display, he also treasured up in his mind moral and political history and science. Nature had given him uncommon talents. The plan of his education was peculiarly adapted for forming and

strengthening his faculties, his own choice afforded him the most useful materials, and his judgment directed his powers and exertions to the most important objects. So qualified and prepared, on leaving the university, he betook himself to the study of the law; and with his powers, previous acquirements, and persevering industry, made very distinguished progress. His moral qualities and habits greatly facilitated the operations of his intellect: he was untainted by the dissipation which often diverts to improper objects the force of very great minds, and by that debauchery which precludes confident reliance on the exertions of its votaries, however extraordinary their genius may be, and even weakens the faculties themselves. He had a firmness of temper which steadily pursued what he perceived to be right; and adhered to his own plans of conduct, undisturbed by the ridicule of frivolity, and unseduced by the allurements of vice. His relaxations from study and business tended to the improvement of his understanding. Rational conviviality with men of talents and knowledge gave to discourse and discussion hours bestowed by many young men on the licentiousness of the stews or the phrenzy of the gaming-table.

His contemporaries at Cambridge proposed that he should stand candidate for representing

the university in parliament: this he declined, and was returned member for Poole. His first public appearance had been two years before his election. Soon after his father's death, a report had been spread of a negotiation having gone on the preceding winter, between Lord Chatham and Lord Bute, for Chatham coming into Administration. Some said that Lord Bute had applied to Chatham, others that Chatham had applied to Bute. This last supposition, with great reason, Pitt considered as derogatory to his father. A statement, published by the Chatham family, and drawn up by Pitt, was considered by Lord Mountstuart as tending to convey an idea that his father had applied to Chatham. In endeavouring to refute that notion, he advanced some observations calculated to make it appear that Lord Chatham had applied to Lord Bute. Mountstuart, a sensible, well informed, experienced man, on the one side, and Pitt, a youth of nineteen, on the other, entered into discussion of the subject. Pitt manifested a striking superiority in genius and reasoning.

In his speech on Burke's reform, Pitt acquitted himself so as to justify the anticipations of the public in his favour. He in some measure joined the party which Burke and Fox headed, but maintained the sentiments of his father respecting the independence of America.

One of the chief excellencies of Pitt's speeches is the clearness of the arrangement. This appears to result from a comprehensive mind viewing the subject in all its parts and relations, and disposing them in such a way as, from that view, he perceives, will render them most effectual. In clearness and comprehensiveness I think he considerably resembles Dr. Robertson. He completely finishes all that is necessary to be said on one point before he proceeds to another ; so as to preclude the necessity of repetition. He makes his arguments bear strongly on the question. In the rapidity and the abundance of his thoughts, observations, and arguments, he is probably not equal to Fox. In the abundance of knowledge, images, and arguments, neither he nor any man in the house equalled Burke. But in the appositeness of his reasonings to the point at issue, in the application of means to the end, he certainly equals either Burke or Fox, and habitually surpasses them both. If we consider the speeches of these three great men, Pitt, Fox, and Burke, as we should do a proposition in Euclid, enunciating a certain theorem to be proved true or false, and estimate the arguments of each by their exclusive tendency to prove the proposition enunciated, we must certainly give the preference to Pitt. The closeness of Pitt has converged the rays of Fox's genius. Fox, no doubt, can reason closely or loosely as he pleases ; but who-

ever peruses his speeches during Lord North's administration, and his speeches during Mr. Pitt's, will find that, excellent as they were in the former period, they are still more excellent in the latter, having their amazing force more compacted and better directed. In the latter period we seldom find that vehement declamation, that profusion of invective, which frequently marked his speeches in the former. Indeed, when we compare Fox's speeches in the House of Commons with those he makes in mixed clubs, where he has every thing his own way, and nobody to oppose him, we perceive a very striking difference. In the one he assumes positions neither self-evident, proved, nor universally admitted to be true, and declaims upon them as if they were axioms; in the other he advances no proposition without either true or plausible grounds. The acuteness, indeed, of Pitt very readily perceives a flaw in an opponent's argument. His eloquence, as well as that of Burke and Fox, is original. We do not find that it so specially resembles that of any other orator, ancient or modern, as to give ground to believe that he has followed a model. While closely attentive to logical precision, he has not neglected rhetorical art. His language is proper, elegant, and harmonious. His speeches, on the whole, are the result of a strong, full, capacious, and well formed mind.

About the same time another member ap-

peared on the side of Opposition, also displaying talents very superior to those of the majority of parliamentary speakers. Mr. Sheridan having earned and acquired a character by his comic poetry, surpassing that of any writer since the time of Congreve, came to display in the senate a genius that had procured him such applause on the theatre. Penetrating acuteness of discernment, fertility of invention, variety, abundance, and brilliancy of wit, force and justness of humour, Sheridan possesses above most men. His powers he directs with great dexterity, so as to give them all possible effect. He is an elegant classical scholar, and has an exquisite taste. His mind, however, is not enriched by knowledge equal to its capacity: hence his eloquence, though manifesting great ingenuity in occasional observation, seldom contains a considerable quantity or variety of new information. That he can reason well, appears often in the strength and shrewdness of his remarks and inferences; but his speeches cannot be said to have argumentation for a leading characteristic. His arguments are singly forcible, rather than collectively chained. Sheridan is not peculiarly eminent for continuous reply, although his speeches, in opening a debate or discussing a question proposed by himself, be distinguished for ability, ingenuity, and eloquence. But, if his replies are defective, it requires no

great penetration to see that the deficiency is owing to the want of particular knowledge, not of general powers. He has dealt more in sarcasm than any speaker in the house. Burke, indeed, could be as sarcastic as any man ; but was not so often so as Sheridan. I remember, when Sheridan, Fox, and Burke were co operators in politics, to have heard a gentleman give the following character of the severities which each of them occasionally employed, and Sheridan most frequently. “ The sarcasms of Sheridan, mingled as they are with the strongest humour and adorned with the most brilliant wit, appear to result from natural or habitual acidity of temper ; Burke’s to arise either from particular irritation, political opposition, or moral censure ; Fox never sour, seldom transported into rage, abounding in the milk of human kindness, was rarely severe, but from the opposition of party or the disapprobation of patriotism and virtue.”— Sheridan displays a very thorough knowledge of human nature, not indeed so much of the anatomy of mind, as of its active powers, and the springs that set them in motion. His writings do not only exhibit manners and the surface of life ; but character, sentiment, and passion ; with their causes and their operation. Men of genius, in imitative performances, as they advance in experience, knowing Nature better, copy from her more closely. In the plays of

Fielding, written in the early part of his life, we meet with several fancy pictures; in his first novel, although there be a considerable degree of imitation of real life, yet there is in it a good deal that has no archetype but in the author's imagination. Tom Jones is a complete copy of actual and usual existence. This has been the case with Sheridan in his first comedy: ingenious and able as it is, some of the principal characters either do not at all resemble any to be found in real life, or resemble them very slightly; of the first sort is *Acres*, of the second is *Lydia Languish*. In the *School for Scandal* there is not a character, of which originals are not to be daily found in real life. This progression from fancy to actual existence is, in imitative performances, analogous to that in philosophical researches from abstraction to experience. The *Rivals* is the work of great genius, operating on somewhat scanty materials, collected partly only from observation, and therefore having recourse to fancy: the *School for Scandal* is the work of great genius, matured in the knowledge of that class of objects on which its exertions are employed, and taking real conduct for its archetype.

Sheridan first distinguished himself in parliament by a speech concerning the employment of the military during the riots. Its object was to ascertain the circumstances in which it might be necessary to have recourse to the

military power, and to inquire whether that necessity, in the case of the riots, was not owing to the negligence of the magistracy? Burke voted for his motions, but did not exert himself in their support. He probably thought that it was impossible to define *a priori* what should constitute such a necessity.

In a discussion concerning Indian affairs, Lord North proposed certain regulations of the commercial profits and territorial acquisitions of the East India Company, against which Burke made a very eloquent speech, intended to shew that the plan of the Minister was a violation of chartered rights; an attempt to rob the Company, in order to extend the influence of the Minister, by an addition of lavish and profligate corruption.

The detractors from Burke have endeavoured to prove, that his defence of chartered rights, on this and preceding questions concerning India affairs, and the proposed infringement of charters by the East India bill in 1783, were inconsistent with each other. That allegation I shall consider when I come to Mr. Fox's bills.

Towards the close of the session Burke made a motion concerning the extreme rigour that had been used to the inhabitants of St. Eustatius, after the capture of that island. He described their sufferings, and the rapacity of the conquerors, in the strongest colours; and took,

as he usually did, a large and general view of the subject ; investigating, from history and from the writings of the civilians, the right of conquerors to the effects of the conquered ; and endeavouring to prove that the seizure of private property belonging to enemies, in such circumstances, was a violation of the law of nations. If by the law of nations is meant the custom of civilized states, in their various relations, it does not appear that Burke made out his case. Besides, Admiral Rodney, the captor of St. Eustatius, was absent, and it would have been unjust to have instituted an inquiry into his conduct without giving him an opportunity of answering to the charges. The implicit admirers of Burke may impute the proposed prosecution of a victorious commander to humanity ; impartial examiners of his conduct will more readily attribute it to party spirit.

A motion was made, and introduced by the energetic eloquence of Fox, for the house to resolve itself into a committee, to consider of the American war. The motion was supported by the whole force of Opposition, a combination of talents of the highest rank, seldom united,—by Sheridan, by Dunning, by Pitt, by Burke, and by Fox. Each of these orators, all fit for being leaders of a political party, exerted his eloquence on the question. The motion

was negatived; and soon after the session closed.

When we consider the number of enemies with whom Britain had to cope, we might suppose that she would be compelled to act chiefly on the defensive. This, however, was not the case. Her offensive operations were vigorous, and in some cases successful. Admiral Kempenfelt, with an inferior force, defeated a French fleet off Ushant. Admiral Parker fought the Dutch off the Dogger Bank, with little advantage to either side. In the West Indies, the British, after capturing St. Eustatius, had several actions with the French fleets; but without any signal advantages on either side. In America, the British were victorious by sea: by land several successful inroads were made into the provinces, and affairs for some time wore rather a favourable aspect; but received a fatal reverse in the capture of the brave Cornwallis, with the whole of the southern army. This event contributed, more than any that had yet happened, to produce an irresistible conviction in the minds of the British, that the subjugation of America was impracticable. As mankind in general judge more from EVENTS than from PLANS, the discomfiture of our forces produced great clamours against the Ministry; even from those who had before been most strenuous in recommending the coercion of

America, and most sanguine in their expectation of success. The Opposition, from the arrival of the accounts which came about the commencement of the Christmas holidays, proposed to proceed against the Ministry with a vigour now animated by a well grounded expectation of success. Many, who had professed themselves the friends of Lord North, either now really disapproving of his measures, or, what is as probable, foreseeing that he could not much longer continue in office, left him.

It was concerted, that the attack should be begun, immediately after the recess, by Mr. Fox, who was to make a motion for an investigation into the conduct of Lord Sandwich. Indisposition for some days prevented that orator from attending the house: on which Burke said, “no one laments Mr. Fox’s illness more than I do; and I declare, if he should continue ill, the inquiry into the conduct of the First Lord of the Admiralty should not be proceeded upon; and even should the country suffer so serious a calamity as his death, it ought to be followed up earnestly and solemnly; nay, of so much consequence is the inquiry to the public, that no bad use would be made of the skin of his departed friend, should such be his fate, if, like that of John Zisca, it should be converted into a drum, and used for the purpose of sounding an alarm to the people of England.”

February 7, 1782, Mr. Fox began his attack on the Ministry, by moving accusations against Lord Sandwich, under five several heads, which he summed up as the ground of a resolution declaratory of mismanagement in naval affairs. Burke supported the motion; and though it was negatived, the majority was so small as to render it probable that Ministers could not much longer stand their ground. February 22, General Conway made a motion for addressing his Majesty to put an end to the American War. Burke supported this motion by all his powers of humour and of serious reasoning. It was lost by a majority of only one. February 27th, General Conway put the motion in a different form, and carried it by a majority of nineteen. The country gentlemen now joined Opposition. Lord John Cavendish made a motion, declaring that the house could no longer repose confidence in the Ministry, which was at first rejected by a small majority; but a few days after, a similar motion was made, on which Lord North rose, and declared that he was no longer Minister. A new Administration was formed, of which the Marquis of Rockingham was the nominal head and Mr. Fox the real. Burke was appointed Paymaster-general.

Thus have we seen Burke steadily and vigorously endeavouring, first, to prevent the contest with America; then to end the war, and to

have its supporters deprived of those offices in which they appear to him to follow counsels pernicious to his country. We have seen him display knowledge and wisdom equal to any which a statesman or senator ever exerted. We see the great philosopher, thoroughly acquainted with every particular and general truth, applying the most profound knowledge of the human mind and extensive views of particular and general history to the conduct of affairs. On every general question we see the sage, but on questions respecting particular men we frequently see the partizan. Burke, in whatever he engaged, engaged warmly. It is indeed difficult, if not impossible, for any man to associate with a set of men, whom he esteems and respects, without often adopting views and opinions merely as theirs. The longer one is connected with a party, the more implicitly does he embrace their notions, unless they should *go to a length, on either the one side or the other, to awaken his reflection, and RECALL THE IMPARTIAL EXERCISE OF HIS JUDGMENT.* Burke, in the progress of the opposition to the American war, became almost a thorough party-man. We find him frequently supporting whatever motions any of the Opposition members made, with all the zeal that could have inspired him from conviction and mature reflection. He cherished the children of his adoption with as warm affection as if they had been

begotten by himself. Besides the general influence of party sympathy operating on a mind of the most lively susceptibility, there were special circumstances in that party which rendered the influence of the sympathy still more powerful. No man can be more completely adapted for captivating the minds of those with whom he has frequent intercourse, than Mr. Fox. His dispositions are so amiable; his manners so open, frank, and engaging; his deportment so unassuming; he bears his great qualities so meekly about him; he appears so little conscious of his immense superiority over ordinary men; he is so attentive to the gratification of his friends, and indeed to the diffusion of happiness, that he never fails to win the love of all with whom he converses. I do not mention this as a praise to Mr. Fox. A power of commanding affection, and so influencing action, may be certainly advantageous to the possessor himself, and to those within the sphere of his influence: but it is advantageous to others, and its exertion meritorious to himself, according to its objects. The influence which Fox has obtained over many is or is not useful, according to its direction to their real welfare and happiness, or the contrary. However that may be, it is a certain fact, that those with whom he has been embarked have regarded him with an affection much beyond mere party politics. Those are, of all, the most at-

tached to him, who, possessing great abilities themselves, can form the most adequate idea of his powers. Burke admired and loved Fox; and though possessing powers of discernment which even Fox himself did not exceed, became, as the American war advanced, as he grew more and more connected with Fox, a more and more implicit supporter of the measures which that statesman proposed, either for himself or as the mouth of a party.

A careful examiner of the parliamentary conduct of Burke will observe a very considerable difference between the speeches he made in supporting his own motions and those of others, between the children of his adoption and of his generation. Those of his adoption resembled the party; those of his generation RESEMBLED HIMSELF. His speeches, in attacking Sandwich, Palliser, Germaine, and North, were strongly tinged with the partizanship of Opposition. His speeches on American taxation, on reconciliation with America, on public œconomy, and such great questions as drew his powers out, were the speeches not of the party but of Edmund Burke; not of the advocate for a side in a judicial question, but of a wise and enlightened senator on momentous subjects of deliberation. Although Fox, in the vehemence of his invectives against Lord North, had repeatedly declared that he wished he might be reckoned the most infamous of mankind if ever he acted

in an administration with him, and even said he would be afraid to be left in the same room with him, (expressions which every liberal man will consider as the temporary ebullition of passion, not as a deliberate pledge of conduct) there was a great resemblance between these two leaders in several circumstances. Lord North was a man of most pleasing, amiable manners, and very desirous of serving his friends. Perhaps, indeed, few did more to promote the interest of those whom he considered as attached to him. From many, after his loss of power, he experienced ingratitude ; yet not from all. Several men of great respectability continued to adhere to his cause when their interest would have directed them to the opposite course. As he had a heart himself disposed for kindness, he felt the kindness or unkindness, gratitude or ingratitude of others with keen sensibility. One day he happened to be dining with a gentleman of the law, who had been a very able supporter of his administration, and had been patronized by him, and had ever afterwards manifested the warmest gratitude and attachment. After dinner, a little boy, named William, came up to his Lordship, got strawberries from him, and shewed great fondness for him. Afterwards, at tea, his Lordship proposing to renew their acquaintance, William turned his back upon him. “ Ah ! William, (said Lord North) you are

not the only one that paid court to me while I could give them strawberries, but turn their backs upon me when I have none to give them."

Although, no doubt, Lord North's administration was in many points objectionable; although his indulgence to his friends led him to too great profusion of donative, his own private integrity stands unimpeached. Fox and Burke, as the leaders of a party, might inveigh against his continuance in office; as patriots of extraordinary ability might censure some of his measures; but neither they, nor any one, ever accused him of applying the public money to his own use. As public men, they opposed his public conduct; as private, they could not personally dislike a man whose open and amiable dispositions and manners resembled their own.

The first measure proposed by Fox as Minister, and supported by Burke, appears to have been somewhat precipitate:—an offer of peace to the Dutch, which they received very coldly.

Mr. Fox brought a message from the King, recommending the adoption of a plan for the retrenchment of expences. The object of this was to pave the way for the revival of Burke's reform bill, which, after several modifications, passed. Several popular propositions were made by the new Ministry or their adherents, and adopted. The resolution of 1769, respecting

the Middlesex election, and against which Burke had displayed such eloquence, was expunged from the journals of the house. Such measures were proposed as tended to satisfy Ireland, by rendering the parliament of that country independent of that of Great Britain. The only party measure with which this Administration was chargeable was the appointment of Admiral Pigot to supersede Rodney, who had, on the famous 12th of April, gained a most celebrated naval victory. July 1, 1782, the Marquis of Rockingham died.

Burke wrote the following inscription for the mausoleum erected to the Marquis's memory in Wentworth Park, in which Lord Fitzwilliam has also placed a bust of the author

“ Charles, Marquis of Rockingham,—a statesman, in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness, were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts.

“ A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect to all his measures. In Opposition, he respected the principles of Government ; in Administration, he provided for the liberties of the people. He employed his moments of power in realizing every thing which he had proposed in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the pub-

lic, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

By his prudence and patience, he brought together a party, which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depository of principle.

“ The virtues of his public and private life were not, in him, of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind, which, in the internal relations of life, conciliated the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty and untractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

“ Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

REMEMBER, RESEMBLE, PERSEVERE.”

A circumstance, which happened about this time, exposed Burke to a good deal of detraction. Powel and Bembridge, formerly stewards to Lord Holland, when Paymaster-general, had been summoned by the House of Commons to account for a balance remaining in their hands. Their account appeared to most people

a very lame one. Burke, however, undertook to vindicate their conduct and character. Some of his friends, particularly Colonel Barré, thinking very unfavourably of Powel and Bembridge, strenuously dissuaded Burke from interfering. He, however, was not convinced, and patronized them. As their defalcation soon became very evident, Burke's defence of them was imputed to the meanest motives. There is no evidence adduced, to prove that he vindicated them, on really knowing them to be guilty ; but he is certainly chargeable with listening to wrong information, or being guided by erroneous judgment ; a charge which merely proves that he was not infallible.

It was understood by Burke, Fox, and their adherents, that the Duke of Portland was to succeed the Marquis of Rockingham. Lord Shelburne, however, found means to procure the appointment for himself, without consulting with the other members of Administration. Mr Fox and Mr. Burke immediately resigned. Each, in a very able speech, assigned the motives of his resignation. Lord Shelburne was known to be against the independence of America. Burke and Fox considered it as a necessary preliminary to peace, because it could not be withheld, and the Americans would not treat unless it were previously acknowledged. Burke and Fox, who were both open, and above the petty artifice of court intrigue, were dis-

pleased with the mode of Shelburne's appointment, as it had been private, after they considered him as having agreed that the Duke of Portland should be invested with the office, and that the plans of the Rockingham Administration should be pursued. Pitt, though offered a high appointment in the Rockingham Ministry, would not accept of it; and abstained from much connection with Fox and Burke. He had embraced the sentiments of his father respecting the independence of America; sentiments different from those of Burke and Fox. During the Rockingham Administration, Pitt made a motion for a reform in parliament, which he supported by very ingenious arguments; arguments, however, the strength or weakness of which depends entirely on the circumstances of the times.

Pitt, when Lord Shelburne was made First Lord of the Treasury, was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer; an appointment to which the same objections could not be made as to that of Premier, Pitt being under no engagements to the late Administration.

Military operations were in a great degree suspended in America. Admiral Rodney had gained a great victory in the West-Indies. In Europe, Gibraltar was the principal scene of war. There the courage, conduct, and genius of Elliot destroyed the works of the Spaniards, and so rendered the continuance of a siege im-

practicable ; whilst the ability and skill of Lord Howe relieved the garrison from the evils of a blockade. In the East-Indies, though Britain had to contend with the French, the Dutch, and the national powers from the northern parts of the hither peninsula to the southern, yet was she victorious, through the abilities of Hastings.

During the winter a negotiation was opened between the belligerent powers, tired with a war wasteful to all parties ; and a peace was concluded in January, 1783.

When the session opened, the terms of the peace were very severely arraigned by Opposition, now consisting of the friends of Burke and Fox, and of Lord North, who had formed the famous coalition.

When parliament met, December 5th, 1782, Fox explained the grounds of his resignation and that of his colleagues. When in Administration, he had proposed “ to recognize the independence of the United States in the first instance, and not to reserve it as a condition of peace.” To this proposal Lord Shelburne had agreed, and had written an official letter to the Commander in Chief in America, to communicate the resolution to the United States. Fox then considered Shelburne as having pledged himself to agree to an unconditional acknowledgement of the independence of America. “ Judge then, (said Fox) of my grief and asto-

nishment, when, during the illness of my noble friend, (th Marquis of Rockingham) another language was heard in the cabinet; and the noble Earl and his friends began to consider the above letter as containing offers only of a conditional nature, to be recalled, if not accepted, as the price of peace. Finding myself thus ensnared and betrayed, and all confidence destroyed, I quitted a situation in which I found I could not remain either with honour or safety." Burke declared himself actuated by the same motives, and determined by the same reasons as Mr. Fox, to retire from the Ministry. He made a very able and brilliant speech, full of wit, satire, and argument, against the Prime Minister; contending, that his conduct had been a composition of hypocrisy and absurdity. Although many might blame Burke and Fox for withdrawing their powers from Administration, merely because they had been thwarted in some measures, and in one appointment, when the country so much wanted the services of its greatest men, yet no one can charge them with artifice or duplicity; what they did, they did boldly and avowedly.

However much several members disapproved of certain parts of the King's speech, considering unanimity as necessary at so critical a juncture, no one proposed an amendment. When the conclusion of peace was announced to parliament, the terms on which it had been made

excited great disapprobation; both from Burke, Fox, and their friends; and from Lord North and his friends. Pitt, with the assistance of hardly any very able man but Dundas, had, in the House of Commons, to cope with the combined strength of the North and Fox parties. The Ministerial speakers defended the peace as the best that could be attained in the circumstances of the country. The coalesced opponents maintained that our resources were still in a flourishing state, and that the army and navy were in the best condition, and could easily stand the brunt of another campaign. This favourable view of our situation was certainly much more consistently exhibited by Lord North, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Adam, and Lord Mulgrave, who had uniformly maintained that our army and navy were in a vigorous state, than by Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, who had as uniformly maintained that they were in an exhausted state during many years, when the national finances had certainly not been so much drained, nor so many of its troops consumed as at that time. Burke and Fox could not justly alledge that the state of our finances and forces were much meliorated during their short Administration. They had repeatedly asserted that peace on any terms was adviseable to Britain, when in a much less exhausted situation. They had offered peace to Holland; they had proposed unconditionally to recognize the independence of America; they

had shewn themselves anxious to attain what they so often said was necessary to the salvation of Britain on any terms. Their disapprobation, therefore, of peace we may, without any deviation from candour, conclude to have arisen fully as much from party opposition as from a conviction of its inexpediency.

The ministerial speakers, after defending the main object, attacked the coalition. They contended, that an union between men of so heterogeneous principles as those which Burke and Fox, on the one hand, and Lord North, on the other, had always professed to entertain, must be from some different reason than mutual agreement of political idea. The combined parties procured a majority in the house, and passed a vote of censure on the Ministry. The coalition was bitterly inveighed against both in and out of parliament. Though prevalent in both houses, it was on the whole unpopular. To arraign an union of men once opposite or even inimical to each other, without considering the object of the combination, or the conduct of its members in their combined capacity, would be the result of prejudice, not of judgment. A change of circumstances often renders it just to deviate from that plan of political conduct which it was once right to pursue, and to act with those men whom it was once right to oppose. The abuse thrown out against Burke and the other coalesced leaders, merely because

they had coalesced, after much mutual obloquy, was the abuse of ignorant declaimers, not of impartial, informed, and able reasoners. Very able, well informed reasoners, no doubt, did very severely blame the coalition; but that blame must have proceeded from either a view or anticipation of their conduct.

In consequence of the vote of censure, the Ministers resigned their employments. A new Ministry was appointed, composed of Burke, Fox, the Duke of Portland, and their friends; Lord North, Lord Loughborough, and their friends. Burke had his former employment of Paymaster-general, an employment he accepted for the sake of reform. The business of the greatest importance, which occupied the attention of Parliament during the remainder of this session, was the opening a commercial intercourse with North America, by repealing, in the first place, the prohibitory acts which had passed during the contest; and, in the second, preparing such new regulations as the acknowledgment of American independence rendered necessary. In the new relation in which America now stood, many new modifications were requisite for the purposes of commercial intercourse. A temporary act was passed, investing his Majesty with certain powers for the better carrying on trade and commerce between his Majesty's dominions and the United States. This act was to operate

only a limited time, until that branch of commerce should be settled by both parties on a more permanent footing. East India affairs also were the subject of investigation at this time. No law, however, was grounded on the information procured by the committee during this session.

The more complicated and numerous engagements of public business prevented Burke from being so frequently in company with his friend Johnson, as before he had plunged so deeply in politics. Whether, on the whole, the great mind of Burke might not have been exerted with as much or more advantage to mankind in the calm pursuits of literature and philosophy, may be questioned. It is certain that every man of extraordinary intellectual powers is not, in proportion to his talents, fitted for conducting political affairs. Hume, speaking of the literary efforts of one of the greatest men the world ever saw, Bacon, after his dismissal from public business, says, "that great philosopher at last acknowledged with regret, that he had too long neglected the true ambition of a fine genius; and, by plunging into business and affairs, which require much less capacity, but greater firmness of mind, than the pursuits of learning, had exposed himself to such grievous calamities."—Burke was evidently deficient in that command of temper which is indispensably necessary to

the management of important business. We see that those of his efforts, which have had the greatest influence on mankind, have been literary more than political. Many of the greatest admirers of his genius have lamented that it should be devoted to faction ; that those talents, which could instruct, delight, and illuminate his own and every future age, should have been so often employed in pursuing objects which very inferior talents could pursue with equal effect ; that a mind of compass and energy equal to any of the age should be wasted in making or supporting motions about the attacking this or that Minister, screening this or that opponent of Ministry. On questions which required nothing more than plain common understanding and obvious inference from testimony, he would often soar to the highest sublimities, which would have made an eminent figure in poetry. With a genius for comprehending every subject of human knowledge, he was often the follower of mere party politics. His literary friends regretted his devotion to politics. Goldsmith has hit off Burke's character, including the prolixity into which the exuberance of his genius and fulness of his mind often transported him, in the following lines:—

“ Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can *praise* it or *blame* it too much ;
Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind :

Tho' fraught with all learning, kept straining his throat,
 To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote ;
 Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on reanimating,
 And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining :
 Tho' equal to all things, for all things unfit,
 Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit ;
 For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
 And too fond of the right to pursue the expedient.
 In fine, 'twas his fate, unemploy'd or in pay, Sir,
 To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor !"

Had Dr. Johnson, from his early youth, devoted himself to parliamentary efforts, it is by no means probable, that he would have done as much good to society as by his Dictionary, Idler, Rambler, Preface to Shakespeare, and Lives of the Poets. Of the members of the literary club, Sir Joshua Reynolds had the greatest intercourse both with Burke and with Fox. Johnson frequently observed, that Sir Joshua adopted the opinions of these great men too implicitly. Reynolds (he said to Boswell) is too much under the influence of the Fox-star and Irish constellation. There is, replied Boswell, no Fox-star ; but, Sir, there is a dog-star. Johnson here must have meant a play of words, as he had the very highest opinion of the abilities of Fox. Johnson, about this time, in order to ascertain whether his mental powers were impaired, determined to try to learn a new language, and fixed upon the Low Dutch. Finding he learned it with facility, he desisted, thinking the experiment had been sufficiently

tried. Burke's ready discernment perceived, instantaneously, that it was not a fair trial, as the Low Dutch is a language so near our own ; had it been one of the languages entirely different, he might, he said, be soon satisfied. Dining one day at Sir Joshua's, Johnson repeated his gradation of liquors—claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes. " Then," said Burke, " let me have claret : I love to be a boy, and to have the careless gaiety of boyish days." Though Burke relished a cheerful glass, he did not exceed ; and did not prefer strong wine. As the Ministry had been active in procuring a separate establishment for the Prince, the leading men of them were frequently with his Royal Highness. One day, after dinner, the Prince, about to propose a bumper toast, asked Burke, if a toast-master was not absolute ? He instantly answered, " yes, Sir, *JURE DE VINO*." " That is the only way," replied his Royal Highness, " in which I should wish to be absolute."

Burke, in speaking of any person, could very happily assume his style. A gentleman in company observing, that the language of Young resembled that of Johnson, Burke replied, " it may have the appearance, but has not the reality ; it possesses the nodosities of the oak, without its strength."

Burke for some time had been devoting his attention to the affairs of India, to the commerce, territorial possessions, and general state

of the Company's affairs, and also to the conduct of their servants in India. It is not doubted that the knowledge of Burke was instrumental in supplying Fox with the materials from which he formed his bill; a bill, to the passing of which neither Burke nor Fox anticipated any powerful obstruction. The Ministry had certainly many symptoms of strength superior to that possessed by any Ministry since the commencement of this reign. It combined the leading members of both parties during the American war. It united philosophy and genius with official experience. To consolidate parts, formerly heterogeneous, into one mass, a great weight of aristocratic influence was superinduced. Lord North retained many of his numerous supporters. Fox had a less numerous, but more able band of friends. The result of this union of genius, experience, rank, and property, was a majority seldom seen in favour of the Minister from the time of the illustrious Pitt. It was more likely to continue, because not depending solely on the native genius of the Minister, it had so many strong adventitious supports. Strong, however, as the building appeared, there was a latent flaw. The Administration had been evidently forced upon the Sovereign, and was suspected by many, and known by some, to be disagreeable to that personage and his courtiers. The people also regarded the coalition with a jealous

eye. The party which the coalition had driven from power, it might be well supposed, would narrowly watch every opportunity which either the favour of the Sovereign, or the people, might improve to them. The India bill of Mr. Fox afforded them the opportunity they wished.

The session met on the 11th day of November. The speech and address were received in the House of Lords, without any censure, except from Earl Temple alone; and in the House of Commons with unanimity and applause.

Nov. 18, Fox introduced, with a speech that few ever equalled, and even he himself never surpassed, his famous India bill. To enter into a detail of a measure so well known, would be unnecessary, and, indeed, foreign to my purpose. It may not, however, be irrelative to repeat its leading objects and features, as Burke was its most strenuous supporter. The system proposed by Fox characterised his ardent daring spirit, his comprehensive, expanded, and inventive genius. Whether in its tendency and principles a good or a bad measure, it was undoubtedly at once open, decisive, and efficient. He either assumed or concluded that the East-India Company had so completely mismanaged their affairs as to be in a state of insolvency, and that their servants had been guilty of the most atrocious oppression in India. On this hypothesis or conviction he formed his plan. To prevent the continuance of mismanagement

by the East India Company, he proposed what would have been certainly very effectual as to that object, the taking the management of their own affairs, territorial and commercial, entirely out of the hands of the proprietors and the directors; their house in Leadenhall-street, together with all books, papers, and documents: vesting the entire management, the appointment of all officers and servants, the rights of peace and war, and the disposal of the whole revenue, in the hands of certain commissioners, to be appointed, in the first instance, by the whole legislature, and afterwards by the Crown. It was proposed they should hold their offices by the same tenure as the judges of England, and thus not be dependent on the Minister of the time. The proposed commissioners were eight of the particular friends of Mr. Fox. For preventing oppressive and despotical proceedings in the administration of the territorial possessions, a second bill was added, ascertaining precisely the powers of the Governor-general, supreme council, and other officers which the commissioners might appoint; and also the privileges of the zemindars (land-holders) and other natives.

Mr. Pitt took a vigorous and decided part in opposing this bill. From him indeed and Dundas did it meet with almost the sole opposition it experienced in its passage through the House of Commons. Pitt attacked it in the first place

as an infringement, or rather annihilation of the Company's charter ; insisting that the charter was as clear and strong, and the right founded on it as well ascertained, as that of any chartered body in the kingdom ; that the violation of the India Company's rights, glaringly unjust in itself, militated against the security of all chartered rights. He argued, that besides its injustice respecting the Company, it would be dangerous to the constitution, by establishing an influence independent of the legislature ; an influence that, from its nature, would be under the controul of its creator, Mr. Fox. He did not hesitate to impute so unjust and so unconstitutional a plan to an ambitious desire of being perpetual dictator. Dundas coinciding with Pitt's idea, that the system was unjust and unconstitutional, and concurring in his assignation of motives, entered into a detailed discussion of Fox's statement of the finances of the Company ; insisting that their affairs were by no means in that desperate state which Fox alledged. The proprietors and directors of the East India Company petitioned the house not to pass a bill, operating as the confiscation of their property and annihilation of their charters, without proving specific delinquency that might merit the forfeiture of their privileges and property ; asserting, that proved delinquency alone could justify such a bill, and desiring the charges and proofs might be

brought forward. The people, in general, were strongly impressed by the arguments of the opposers of the bill, and the representation of those whose rights and property it appeared to affect. Burke made, at the second reading, a speech equal for eloquence to any he had ever produced; whether, however, in the accuracy of his information, in the justness of his conclusions, in the truth of what he advanced, and the wisdom of what he proposed, he equalled his own efforts on other occasions, was not then so evident.

Burke admitted, to the fullest extent, that the charter of the East India Company had been sanctioned by the King and Parliament; that the Company had bought it, and honestly paid for it; and that they had every right to it, which such a sanction and such a purchase could convey. Having granted this to the opponents of the bill, he maintained, that, notwithstanding that sanction and purchase, the proposed change ought to take place. He proceeded on the great and broad grounds of ethics, arguing that no special covenant, however sanctioned, can authorise a violation of the laws of morality; that if a covenant operates to the misery of mankind, to oppression and injustice, the general obligation to prevent wickedness is antecedent and superior to any special obligation to perform a covenant; that parliament had sold all they had a right to sell;

they had sold an exclusive privilege to trade, but not a privilege to rob and oppress ; and that if what they sold for the purposes of commerce was made the instrument of oppression and pillage, it was their duty, as the guardians of the conduct and happiness of all within the sphere of their influence and controul, to prevent so pernicious an operation. After laying down this as a fundamental principle, he proceeded to argue that there had been, and were, the most flagrant acts of oppression in India by the servants of the Company ; that the whole system was oppressive from the beginning of the acquisition of territorial possession. He entered into a detail of the principal instances of pillage, rapine, violence, and despotism, attributed to the English, and dwelt with great energy and pathos on those acts of which he alledged Mr. Hastings to be guilty.

On this subject he brought forward the principal heads of what afterwards occupied so much of his attention in the prosecution of the Governor general. His imagination, warming as he went along, figured to him, that the only monuments by which the proceedings of the British were distinguished, were waste and desolation. Other conquerors, he said, of every description, had left some monument either of state or beneficence behind them. “ If their passion or their avarice drove the Tartar hordes to acts of rapacity or tyranny, there had been

time enough in the short life of man to repair the desolations of war by the acts of magnificence and peace. But under the English government all this order was reversed. Our conquest there, after twenty years, was as crude as it had been the first day. The natives scarce knew what it was to see the grey head of an Englishman. Young men (almost boys) governed there, without society and without sympathy with the natives. They had no more social habits with the people than if they still resided in England; nor indeed any species of intercourse, but that which was necessary to the making a sudden fortune with a view to a remote settlement. Animated with all the avarice of age, and all the impetuosity of youth, they rolled in one after another, wave after wave, and there was nothing before the eyes of the natives but an endless, hopeless prospect of new flights of birds of prey and passage, with appetites continually renewing for a food that was continually wasting. Were we to be driven out of India this day, nothing would remain to tell that it had been possessed during the inglorious period of our dominion, by any thing better than the ouran-outang, or the tyger." The peroration was an eulogium on his friend Fox as the mover of the bill. After a very animated general panegyric, he entered on the praises of the bill, anticipating the fervent and adoring gratitude with which he and the supporters of it would be

regarded in India. He said, " There was not a tongue, a nation, a religion in India, which would not bless the presiding care and manly beneficence of that house and of him who proposed to them this great work. Their names would never be separated before the throne of the Divine Goodness, in whatever language or with whatever rites pardon was asked for sin, and reward for those who imitated the Godhead in his universal bounty to his creatures."

The bill passed the House of Commons by a very great majority. When it came to the Peers, it met, if not with an abler opposition, with a much more numerous in proportion to the number of the assembly; and talents (with the exception of Lord Thurlow) were chiefly on the side of Ministry. The acute and comprehensive genius of Pitt, with the sound sense and extensive knowledge of India affairs possessed by Dundas, had exhausted the arguments that could militate against the bill. Even Thurlow brought forward little new matter on the general merits of the bill, but confined himself chiefly to the attack on Hastings. " If (said he) Hastings be a depopulator of provinces, and an enemy to the human race, let his crimes be brought forward." The close habits of judicial investigation of that great man represented invective, however eloquent, against an individual as mere inanity, unless supported by proof.

Though defended by the Duke of Portland,

Lords Stormont, Carlisle, Sandwich, and Loughborough, with all the force of their respective talents, it was thrown out in the House of Peers. Whether the more decisive opposition that it met with in that house was owing to the Lords, from having had more time to consider its principles and effects, being convinced that it was an unjust and dangerous measure, or to some extrinsic cause, I cannot take upon me to determine. It is certain, that of the Peers (with the exception of the Duke of Richmond, Lord Rawdon, Lords Thurlow and Camden, and a few more) those who were most zealous in opposing it, were not those whose talents and habits of discussion rendered them the most competent judges of great political regulations. It was understood in the House of Commons that it had been represented by authority to many Peers, that those would not be considered as the friends of the Sovereign who voted for the bill. Resolutions of great boldness and decision were adopted, after much debate, by the house, declaring that it was derogatory to the honour of the Crown, and subversive of the constitution of the country, to report any opinion or alledged opinion of the King on any proceeding pending in parliament, so as to influence the votes of the members. The King determined on an entire change of Administration. The principal members were immediately dismissed from office, and a very general resignation of

employments took place. Pitt was appointed Prime Minister. The majority, however, continued in favour of Opposition in the House of Commons. A series of motions was proposed and adopted, tending to prove that the Minister ought not to continue in office without the support of the House of Commons. That no one could be long Minister if thwarted by the House of Commons, is obvious; at the same time, neither law nor precedent was brought forward to prove that the continuance of a Minister in office contrary to the approbation of the House of Commons was unconstitutional. The King certainly, as chief executive magistrate, has a right to chuse his own Ministers, (unless under disqualifications ascertained by law) for performing any branch of the executive duties. The House of Commons have a right to impeach, on the ground of malversation in office, any of the Ministers, but not to prescribe to him in his choice of a Minister. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of the House of Commons Pitt continued in office. Although the majority was against him in the house, it was very evident that it was for him in the nation. His Majesty seeing that the opinion of the House of Commons continued contrary to his own, and conceiving it to be contrary to that of his people, determined to put it in the power of the people to manifest their approbation or disapprobation of their present representatives.

By dissolving parliament, he *virtually asked this question*, DID YOUR LATE REPRESENTATIVES SPEAK YOUR SENSE OR NOT? If they did, you will re-elect them; if not, you will elect others. Being asked this question respecting their late representatives, the greater part of the people answered NO. A very considerable majority of members friendly to Pitt was returned.

The new parliament met the 18th May, 1784. The first business which exercised the talents of Burke was a motion for preventing a scrutiny into the election of his friend Fox; at the instance of Sir Cecil Wray. Fox, on this occasion displayed a minute, accurate, and profound knowledge of law, which astonished the most eminent professional men on both sides. This motion was negatived, and the scrutiny proceeded.

June 14th, Burke made a motion for a representation to the King, the general object of which was to vindicate the conduct of Opposition, and to censure that of Administration. It dwelt particularly on the rectitude and expediency of the late East-India bill, and on the dreadful consequences it affirmed likely to ensue from the dissolution of parliament. Although Burke's speech on this occasion contained very great ingenuity, yet the main arguments were necessarily a repetition of what had been frequently urged before. The motion was negatived without a division.

Several bills were proposed by Pitt respecting India affairs, preparatory to his great plan for managing India. His bill was nearly the same as that which had been rejected by the preceding parliament. Its principal opponents were Mr. Francis, Mr. Eden, and Fox. Burke did not enter much into its merits. It proceeded on a principle different from that of Fox,—that the affairs of the Company were not in a desperate state ; that the Company were fully competent to the management of their *commercial* concerns. It proposed that the dominion of the territorial possessions should be placed under the controul of the executive government ; and that a Board should be instituted for this purpose, to consist of the Ministers for the time being. He considered this plan as the most efficient for the prevention of the oppression of the Company's servants in India, and for the preservation and improvement of our political interests in that country ; and that, on the whole, it would remedy the evil, without the confiscation of property, or the disfranchisement of a great corporate body. Fox represented it as a half measure, and inefficient as to its professed object, and that it increased to an enormous degree the influence of the Crown ; that the Commissioners proposed by his bill could only be removed upon an address from parliament ; that his plan was open and responsible ; that the Board of Con-

troul, by Pitt's bill, depended entirely on the Crown, and that any or all of its members might be removed, if they should contradict the mandates of the advisers of the Crown ; that the negative of the Board of Controul to those appointments, left nominally to the Directors, made that Board really the Directors. Fox affirmed that openness marked every part of his own bill, but that Pitt's was a dark delusive scheme to take away by saps the claims of the Company. Whether, on the whole, the course which Fox steered, or the course which Pitt steered, was the best for India and for Britain, belongs not to a biographer of Burke to determine.

During the parliament which was now commenced, the uncommon genius and eloquence of Burke were treated by many in the house with a disrespect which they never before experienced. It must be confessed, that the richness of his mind very often diffused itself into too great prolixity. Beautiful, sublime, and pathetic, as many of his luxuriant expatiations were, they did not always tend to promote the business at issue. Were Homer to recite his grandest descriptions, his most pathetic episodes, or most exact characteristics of human nature, to an assembly of men engaged on special business, that recital might be very probably considered as an interruption to their own affairs. It might also happen, that there might

be in such an assembly of men, fully competent to the details of business, many who might have neither taste to relish, nor understanding to comprehend such excellencies. In such a situation, a man of the greatest genius might naturally expect to meet with checks. Burke, besides, was very irritable, and often hurried by passion into most violent expressions. His prolixity and irritability gave occasion to treatment of which his powerful genius might, perhaps, be in some degree the cause. While he spoke, several members made a point of coughing, beating the ground with their feet, and even hooting. Frolick, perhaps, might have its share in this mode of opposition, as a great part of the most active senators in that way were of an age when allowance may be made for sport and frolick; and others might claim some of the allowance to juvenile age, although, as to date, their youthful years were long passed. Coughing and hooting were also very convenient in other respects. The lungs and feet were forthcoming for noise, when drafts upon the brain for argument might not be so easily answered. The former were duly honoured; the latter might be returned with the answer of *no effects*. The dignity of conscious superiority ought to have rendered Burke indifferent to such disturbance. He might have contented himself with reflecting that their hoots and coughs could not render them in any

degree equal to him: the croaking of the frogs ought not to have discomposed the lion. Instead of that, he frequently fell into the most outrageous fits of passion. He once told them that he could discipline a pack of hounds to yelp with much more melody, and equal comprehension.

In the beginning of July, he made a speech on the enormities he ascribed to Hastings. In the picture he drew, he displayed powers which might have composed a most admirable tragedy. The sufferings he figured to himself, and the avarice and cruelty which his fancy drew as causing them, contained an equal degree of interest and passion with any exhibited on the stage. He brought forward a string of motions, as the foundation of an inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings. Pitt very briefly opposed this, because there were not proofs of the fact, on the supposition of which Burke grounded his inquiry. It does not appear that *at that time* there really was that undoubted evidence of delinquency, which only could support the propriety of the motions. Burke's fancy and passions getting much warmer from opposition, pictured to him Hastings as the greatest monster that had ever existed. Persisting in pressing the subject, he was at length overpowered by a loud and continual clamour. Burke did not enter much on Pitt's bill for the prevention of smuggling, and the commu-

tation act. On the commutation act Mr. Courtenay very much distinguished himself, not only by his humour, but by his information and reasoning.

In the last measure of the session, framed by the able and liberal mind of Dundas, most of the members were of one mind:—the restoration of the forfeited estates. Burke appears to have been so much occupied by inquiries into the conduct of Hastings, that he, during the latter part of that session, seldom spoke, and never for any length of time. The session closed the 20th of August.

Whilst the transactions of the Governor-general were engaging the thoughts of Burke as a public man, a circumstance took place that much moved his feelings as a private. Dr. Johnson, after recovering from an alarming shock, was now in a state of health which, together with his age, appeared to predict a speedy dissolution. Burke went frequently to see his venerable friend, now confined to the bed of sickness. One day, he, along with his friend Mr. Windham, and several other gentlemen, was visiting the dying sage. Burke said, "I'm afraid, my dear Sir, such a number of us may be oppressive to you?"—"No, Sir, (said Johnson) it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state, indeed, when your company would not be a delight to me." Mr. Burke, in a tremulous voice, expressive of being very tenderly

affected, replied, “ my dear Sir, you have always been too good to me.” He immediately afterwards went away. This was the last circumstance in the acquaintance of these two eminent men.

The lofty spirit of Johnson, unbroken by old age and complicated disease, Burke venerated, as he had admired his intellectual force and exertions. He suggested to Boswell, as applicable to Johnson, what Cicero in his *Cato Major* says of *Appius*:—“ *Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti* :” repeating, at the same time, the following noble words in the same passages:—“ *Ita enim senectus honestæ est si se ipsa defendit, si jus suum retinet, si nemini emancipata est, si usque ad extremum vitæ vindicat jus suum.*”

Perhaps literary history does not afford a more striking instance of extraordinary talents, more happily and beneficially exerted, than in the mind of Samuel Johnson. An understanding, acute, poignant, forcible, and profound; an imagination, rich, strong, and brilliant; a most retentive memory, stored with knowledge; were uniformly directed to promote the cause of wisdom, virtue, and religion. “ His Essays (to use the words of his able biographer *) form a body of ethics.” In the usual progres-

* Mr. Murphy, in his *Life of Johnson*, p. 155.

sion of great minds, he became, as he advanced in years and knowledge, more practical. His Rambler shewed more of man in his general nature, as he himself says of Dryden : his Idler, as he says of Pope, more of man in his local manners. His Rambler was the work of a profound, comprehensive philosopher : his Idler, of a man of genius, experienced in life. The former describes men as they always are ; the latter as they were then in England. As a critic, the world, since the time of Aristotle, has seen few, if any, equal to Johnson. Disregarding mere usage, he follows nature and reason : He considers not the *mode* in which the Greek tragedians arranged their performances, but the operation of passion, sentiment, and character in real life. He estimates imitative works by their likeness to originals. As a biographer, he stands unrivalled. He thoroughly knew the human understanding and heart ; was perfectly acquainted with the kind of circumstances in which his subjects acted ; with their individual history and character. In his literary portraits he ably marks the progress of mind ; the incidents and causes which retarded or accelerated its movements, and the completion of its powers, attainments, and exertions. As a philologist, Johnson had not mere knowledge, but also science : he not only collected usages, but investigated principles. He has enriched our language ; and improved it, if not

in ease and elegance, in precision and force: In politics he shewed less advancement than in philology, criticism, biography, and ethics. I do not mean the erroneousness only of his particular notions, but the mode of his general reasoning. In his other writings he is practically wise; in his political, speculatively abstract.

From the whole of his works numerous and important additions have been made to the general mass of information; and still more momentous accessions to the general mass of instruction. Such have been the consequences of an extraordinary mind, exerted upon objects dependent for success on its intrinsic efforts. The moral character of Johnson was as estimable as his intellectual was admirable. He was temperate, intrepid, magnanimous, just, pious, benevolent, and beneficent. His head, his heart, his purse, were employed in doing good, and in dispensing happiness. His manners were less agreeable than his other qualities were valuable. His temper was irritable;—he was impatient of folly and frivolity. He had AN INTOLERANCE TO NONSENSE, very unpleasant to its numerous votaries; and very troublesome in the intercourse of fashionable life: he was peculiarly inimical to nonsense and folly, arrayed in the garb of sense and wisdom. But, with some defects in his social habits, he was,

as a moral and a religious being, far above common men.

Johnson esteemed Burke above all men : he said, he was a perpetual stream of mind. "Burke is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame he has in the world. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you." As Johnson always praised the wonderful genius of Burke, Burke allowed the extraordinary talents of Johnson. One evening that they spent in company with Mr. Langton, Johnson happened to take most of the conversation. On their way home, Burke observed to Langton, that Johnson had been very great that night. Langton admitting this, added, "he wished he had heard more from another person." "Oh, no. (said Burke) it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him." This observation arose from Burke's modesty : had he appreciated with impartiality his own powers, he would have reflected that Johnson or no man was his superior in genius and acquirements. That was, indeed, Johnson's own opinion. He one day quoted, as a very high compliment, an eulogium on his journey to the Western Islands. "Mr. Jackson (he said) told me, there was more good sense upon trade in it, than he should hear in the House of Commons in a year, except from Burke." Burke, who, as

well as his friend Johnson, delighted most in exhibitions of human nature, preferred those parts of the tour that describe the inhabitants to those which merely paint the face of the country.

Burke was one of the chief mourners at the funeral of his illustrious friend; the others were, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir John Hawkins, Mr. Coleman, and the deceased's faithful black servant. These were present, besides Dr. Horsley, General Paoli, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Malone, and many other distinguished persons. Burke, in the ardour of his feeling for the loss of Johnson, uttered the following sentence:—"He has made a chasm which not only nothing can fill up, but which nothing has a tendency to fill up—Johnson is dead. Let us go to the next best.—There is nobody.—No man can be said to put you in mind of Johnson." If Burke's own mind had been uniformly directed to literature and philosophy, as Johnson's was, and not interrupted by party politics, he would have been even greater than Johnson.

Although, except Burke, there was no man whose literary powers were equal to those of Johnson, there were still some men of very great talents, and many of considerable abilities. Robertson, from the publication of his *American History*, had rested on his shield. Gibbon had now given to the world a great portion of his able and operose work; a work of

which the pious men may disrelish some parts, on account of the anti-christian tendency; acute reasoners may alledge, that to promote his favourite notions, he often makes assertions without proof; yet every reader of judgment, comprehension, philosophical and political knowledge, must allow, that it is a most illustrious monument of industry and genius. Another history had just appeared, embracing periods much better known; but, though reciting transactions with which every literary man was well acquainted, exhibiting new and profound views of the character of the agents, and unfolding moral and political causes; marking their operation and effects. The philosophical pen of Fergusson rendered Roman affairs the ground-work of the deepest and most expanded moral and political science. Reid was applying to the subtle subjects of pneumatology the Baconic organ,—induction,—much more invariably, and consequently more successfully, than any preceding metaphysicians. Horsley was defending our religious articles and establishments against the theories and operations of misemployed genius and learning. Blair was promoting practical religion and morality, by making taste the auxiliary of just sentiment and reasoning; and was disseminating the love of elegant literature, by simplifying to common capacities the rules for the various branches of composition: performances

of a lighter cast contain the appropriate excellence. The *Rolliad* and *Birth-day Odes* were very happy effusions of wit and satire. Miss Burney redeemed novels from the disrepute into which they had fallen.

Burke was at this time engaged about no literary production; his attention, though partly devoted to the temporary subjects of parliamentary discussion, such as the Scrutiny and Irish Propositions, was chiefly employed about Indian affairs. From the year 1772 he had kept a watchful eye over the conduct of the Company's servants. He had accurately investigated the circumstances and causes of Lord Pigot's imprisonment in 1776, and has been one of the principal agents in the establishment of the delinquency of the Company's officers, and ascertaining the causes. Afterwards, when Dundas was investigating the conduct of Rumbold, some circumstances were brought forward respecting Mr. Hastings, from which Burke conceived that there was ground for an inquiry into his conduct.

In contemplating Indian affairs, the Nabob of Arcot's conduct and transactions came to be very minutely considered by him, and were the subject of a very able speech in the succeeding session.

This year Burke was chosen Lord Rector of the university of Glasgow, of which the following account is extracted from the perio-

dical publications of the time “ April 10th, 1784, the Right Honourable Edmund Burke was installed in the office of Lord Rector of the university of Glasgow; he was attended by several persons of rank and eminence; the spectators were very numerous, and testified their satisfaction by the highest marks of approbation and applause. His Lordship, after taking the oaths of office, addressed the meeting in a very polite and elegant speech, suited to the occasion. Having attended public worship in the college chapel, he was afterwards entertained by the gentlemen of the university.”

July 14th a cause was tried before Mr. Justice Buller and a special jury for a libel against Mr. Burke by the Public Advertiser. Two men had been pillored at Bristol, for an unnatural crime, and had been very severely beaten and abused by the multitude, to the danger of their lives. The humanity of Burke interested itself in the sufferings of wretches, however worthless, when those sufferings arose not from the sentence of the law, but from the violence of individuals. An infamous paragraph appeared in the papers, insinuating that Burke's reprobation proceeded not from abhorrence of the cruelty, but from sympathy with the criminals. So very scandalous a libel was referred by Burke, without any animadversions from himself, to the Attorney-General. A prosecu-

tion was commenced, and a hundred and fifty pounds damages awarded to the plaintiff.

About the time that this atrocious calumny appeared against Burke's character, there was a very daring attack made upon his property, and not without success. September 28th, his house at Beaconsfield was broken open, and robbed of a variety of plate and other valuable articles. The robbers proceeded with a degree of deliberation not very common in such adventures. They came down from London in a phaeton, which they had hired in Oxford-street. They broke open a field-gate at the side of the road, opposite to the avenue which leads to the house, and left their phaeton in a corner of the field. Mr. Burke was in town, but Mrs. Burke and the rest of the family were at Beaconsfield. The rogues made their way into the house through the area. They proceeded to the place where the plate in daily use was kept, the rest being in an iron chest in a pantry, in which the butler slept: having got 150*l.* worth, they retreated with their booty. They left behind them a match and tinder-box, a sack, a wax-taper, a fashionable cane, and an iron instrument for forcing window-shutters. They also left a tea canister, which they carried out of the house; but they broke it open, and took out of it all the tea. The robbery was discovered about six o'clock, and a pursuit instantly set on foot, but to no purpose. It was afterwards found

that they had crossed the country to Harrow, and from Harrow returned to town, through Islington. The perpetrators were suspected to have been a discharged servant and accomplices, but it was not ascertained.

January 25th, 1785, parliament met. The first occasion on which Burke made a speech, calling forth his powers, was on the payment of the Nabob of Arcot's debts. On the 28th of February Fox made a motion for the production of papers relative to the directions by the Board of Controul for charging on the revenues of the Carnatic the Nabob of Arcot's private debts to Europeans. Dundas maintained that a principal part of the debt was just, as far as the documents in their possession could be credited, and that the remainder was to be the subject of discussion ; that the claimants might prefer their claims, subject to the examination of the other creditors, the debtor, (the Nabob himself) and of the Company, whose revenues the result would affect. Burke, who had been at great pains to render himself completely informed respecting the affairs of India, delivered an oration displaying most extensive knowledge of that country, and the wisest general principles. If the facts were as he represented them, the alledged debts arose from a collusion between the Nabob and certain servants of the Company, who had been guilty of the most heinous frauds, oppression, and cruelties. The

pictures of the sufferings of India, and of the wickedness of its plunderers and oppressors, in force, animation, and colouring equal any that had ever been presented exhibiting misery and guilt.

A motion being made for a parliamentary reform by Mr. Pitt, April 18, and supported with great ability by him, Mr. Fox, Mr. Dundas, and other gentlemen, Burke, conformably to that general plan which had ever regulated his political reasonings and conduct, declared himself inimical to any change in the representation. On that subject he took an opportunity of reprobating the dissemination of doctrines among the people, tending to persuade them that they were aggrieved in the inequality of franchises. The people, he said, were very quiet and contented until they were told that their constitutional rights were violated.

Mr. Richard Burke, Edmund's son, imbibed the opinions of his father, on the inexpediency of innovation in the constitution of the legislature. When Major Cartwright wrote very earnestly in support of universal suffrage and annual parliaments, Richard published a most acute answer, shewing the danger of such a project, and characterising the classes of individuals who were most favourable to its adoption.

Lord North also spoke very ably against a re-

form, and the bill was thrown out by a considerable majority.

The greater part of the remainder of the session was occupied about the commerce of Ireland.

As in the year 1780 the trade of the sister kingdom had been freed from the hurtful restrictions by which it had long been shackled; and which the wisdom and eloquence of Burke so clearly saw, conscientiously attacked, and ably exposed; and as in 1782, its political independence had been completely established; the only object which remained for the consideration of the governments of the two countries, was the settlement of a system of commercial intercourse between them, on the firm basis of reciprocity and mutual advantage. To effectuate that important object, Mr. Pitt made very minute and extensive inquiry into the relative and absolute state of manufactures, and other materials of commerce, in both kingdoms. Receiving, in *resolutions of the Irish House of Commons*, assurances of the wish of that body to settle their commercial intercourse on the basis of reciprocity, and also the outlines of a plan for the purpose, he submitted to the house propositions to be offered to Ireland on the part of Britain. These he reduced into two general heads:—

First, The importation of the produce of our

colonies in the West Indies and America into Ireland.

Secondly, A mutual exchange between the two countries of their respective productions and manufactures upon equal terms.

The examination of merchants and manufacturers took up so much time, that for some weeks there was little or no debate in the House of Commons. The propositions afterwards were the subject of very ample discussion, during which the leading men on both sides distinguished themselves. They passed through both houses of the British parliament; but, when offered to the consideration of the Irish, they experienced so cool a reception, and so small a majority, that their virtual abandonment was deemed expedient.

The Irish propositions called forward less the oratorial powers or philosophical expansion of Burke, than the extent and minuteness of his knowledge. This appeared very striking in his conversations on the materials and processes of various articles of manufacture, the market for them, and the probability of its being affected by the proposed plan. Indeed no subject escaped his attention.

Burke, whenever he spoke of the enormities of the East India Company's servants, described Mr. Hastings as the Captain-general of iniquity; and pledged himself to bring forward momentous charges against him, as soon as he should arrive in England. During the recess of

1785, Mr. Hastings returned from India. Parliament met January 24, 1786. After his Majesty's speech had undergone a discussion, Major Scott, agent to the late Governor-general of Bengal, reminded the house that Mr. Hastings had been some months arrived from his government; and he, therefore, called on Mr. Burke to bring forward the charges. Mr. Burke replied to the Major, by relating an anecdote of the great Duke of Parma, who, being challenged by Henry the Fourth of France "to bring his forces into the open field, and instantly decide their disputes," answered, with a smile, "that he knew very well what he had to do, and was not come so far to be directed by an enemy."

Though Burke did not immediately proceed to the proposed investigation of Mr. Hastings's conduct, it now engaged his attention so much that he did not enter greatly into other subjects of parliamentary deliberation. On the Duke of Richmond's plan of fortification, while Pitt, of the Ministers, stood almost alone, Opposition was conducted by the joint ability of Mr. Windham, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Fox, Lord North, and Mr. Sheridan; but without the aid of Burke. On the reduction of the national debt, the transfer of duties on wine from the Customs to the Excise, and several other subjects of consequence, he did not take an active part.

February 17th he called the attention of the house to the conduct of Mr. Hastings.

No measure, which he ever supported, subjected Burke to more obloquy and abuse than the prosecution of Hastings. The most frivolous, contemptible, and malignant motives were ascribed to him by those who either were favourable to the Governor-general, from admiration of his general conduct, from gratitude for particular benefits, or pretended to be so from receiving pay. Mr. M'Cormick, in deducing the proceedings of Burke from resentment against Mr. Hastings, on account of inattention to Mr. William Burke, is merely the repeater of hacknied abuse; and has not, as in many of his assertions against this great man, the merit of originality. That Burke, or any man, would undertake so laborious a task, which required such minuteness of investigation concerning so intricate details, the materials to be fetched from such a distance, with so great and powerful a body inimical to an inquiry, merely because his friend had been slighted, is hardly within the compass of credibility. The allegation is supported by no proof, and is altogether improbable.

Although the prosecution of Hastings long engaged, and at last fatigued the public attention; and although Burke's conduct in it has been often discussed; yet there are many who have neither considered the rise and progress

of the discussion, nor the series of Burke's proceedings, so as to be able to form an accurate estimate of his motives and reasons. It may, therefore, be not irrelative to the object of this work to take a short review of the steps that led to the impeachment.

The act of 1773 had empowered his Majesty to constitute a supreme court of judicature, whose authority should extend to British subjects, or such others as were for the time employed in the service of the India Company. Complaints were made by the Supreme Council, private subjects of Britain in India, and the Company, 1. That the judges had greatly exceeded their powers: 2. That it extended its jurisdiction to persons whom it does not appear to have been the intention of the King or Parliament to submit to its jurisdiction: 3d. That it has taken cognizance of matters, both originally and pending the suit, the exclusive determination of which they humbly conceive it to have been the intention of the King and Parliament to leave to other courts: 4. That the judges consider the criminal law of England as in force, and binding upon the natives of Bengal, though utterly repugnant to the laws and customs by which they have formerly been governed. Petitions were presented to Parliament by three classes, affected by what they conceived to be an unwarranted assumption of jurisdiction: first, the agents of the British subjects; se-

condly, the Governor-general and Council; thirdly, the Company. The petitions were referred to a Select Committee, composed of members of different sides of the house; Burke was one, and Dundas was chairman. The object of the Committee was an inquiry into the proceedings, not of Mr. Hastings, but of the judges. A great variety of facts were stated to the Committee, particularly under the first head of complaint. It appeared, that the English judges had taken cognizance of causes between native land-holders not in the service of the Company; consequently, by the act of parliament, not within the jurisdiction of the English court; and had proceeded in several cases to inflict severe penalties on those who refused to recognize their authority. The most important instances of alledged extra-judicial assumption were, in civil actions, the Patnar and the Cossijurah causes. In the first, two native magistrates, men of rank and respectability, were imprisoned, and their effects confiscated, by an English sheriff, for their official conduct in a case out of the jurisdiction of the English court. In the second, the Rajah of Cossijurah having resisted the jurisdiction of the court, the sheriff had dispatched an armed force to compel obedience; but the Governor-general and Council ordered a more numerous body to march speedily, and prevent what they conceived to be illegal acts. The most noted instance of interference in extra-judicial cases of

criminal process was the trial and execution of Nundconar for forgery. That person had been proved to have been guilty of the crime; but neither he, nor the person whose name was forged, were subject to the jurisdiction of the English court. By the laws of India forgery is not punishable capitally. Thus a man was put to death by a court, to which he was not amenable, for a crime not capital by the laws to which he was amenable. These, and many other instances of the usurped jurisdiction, proved to be hateful and terrible to the natives, were reported by the Committee to the house; observations were added, not only on the justice but the political tendency of the usurpation by the judges. The Committee was now instructed to take a wider range of inquiry: it was "appointed to take into consideration the state of the administration of justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa, and report the same, as it should appear to them, to the house, with their observations thereupon; and they were instructed to consider how the British possessions in the East Indies may be held and governed with the greatest security and advantage to this country; and by what means the happiness of the native inhabitants may be best promoted."

Their investigation being now not confined to the proceedings of judicative officers, extended itself to the deliberative and executive. In the course of this discussion, acts and pro-

ceedings of Hastings excited their animadversion. Many statements were laid before the Committee which tended to attach blame to the conduct of the Governor-general ; at least, according to the notions of right and wrong that prevailed in England. *

In the management of the revenue, Mr. Hastings had assumed a principle, " that the ruling power in India was the absolute proprietor of the soil ; that, therefore, the zemindars (or land-holders) were subject to every exaction they could possibly bear, which the English Government chose to require." This principle, so contrary to British notions, was also inconsistent with those of India ; so that, if geography changed the nature of justice, such exactions were not consonant to justice in India. As the Committee was instructed to consider, among other things, how the security and happiness of the native inhabitants might be best promoted, it was a part of their duty to report conduct which certainly did *not tend to promote that security and happiness.*

The Rohilla war also attracted their notice.

* Mr. Sheridan, in one of his celebrated speeches on the Begums, delivers an opinion that right and wrong do not depend upon *geography*. Many may probably think he has *reason* on his side ; there is, however, *authority*, and the authority of some of the richest men of the nation, in favour of a maxim, that what would, in Britain, be oppression and robbery, was, in India, justice.

The Governor-general had been forbidden by the East India Company to engage in offensive wars. He had, however, assisted the Nabob of Oude, Sujah Dowla, in the reduction and extirpation of the Rohillas. The Committee saw no grounds for this expedition and extirpation. Mr. Hastings, afterwards speaking on this subject, said, "an occasion took place, when, by a *slight deviation* from the defensive plan, our alliance with the Nabob might be converted into solid advantages. In effect, the same reasons which before urged us to shun every military expedition, now operated in the contrary direction, and recommended the employment of our army for the purpose of REDUCING OUR EXPENCES AND ADDING to our CURRENCY." It is by no means probable, that the Committee would have admitted this principle of Mr. Hastings, that it is a good reason for war, that it may add to currency; in other words, *that aggression is just, when it may bring money*; even had it been laid before them. But as the position had not then been advanced, the Committee had not an opportunity of allowing it the due weight.

It was stated to the Committee that the Rajah Cheyt-Sing had been expelled from Benares for the following reasons:—In an agreement between the Nabob of Oude and the Governor-general, it was settled that Cheyt-Sing, the tributary of Oude, should transfer one half of his

tribute to the India Company ; that the zemindary of Benares, which had descended to him from his father, should be guaranteed to him by the Company on paying that tribute ; the Company *pledging its faith* that no encroachments should ever be made *on his rights by the Company*. This faith was pledged for the Company *by the signature of* WARREN HASTINGS. The rights guaranteed by this pledge was the undisturbed possession of the zemindary of Benares, on the due performance of his part of the covenant, the payment, monthly, of a sum amounting annually to about 260,000 l. Cheyt-Sing was uniformly punctual in the stipulated payments, as Hastings himself admitted.

On the breaking out of the war with France in 1778, the Governor-general required from Cheyt Sing a contribution *not* stipulated in the agreement,—the establishment and maintenance of three battalions of Seapoys. Estimating the expence of the required troops at about 55,000 l. (five lacks of rupees) he ordered the Rajah to pay that sum immediately into the treasury of Calcutta. Cheyt-Sing pleading inability to obey this order of payment, beyond agreement, instantly prayed for delay and for monthly instalments. That accommodation was not allowed him ; he was compelled to pay the whole of the exaction within three months. The same demand was made the two succeeding years, and the Rajah was obliged to submit.

In 1781, an additional demand of thirteen hundred horse was made by Mr. Hastings. The Rajah equipped part, but declared his inability to furnish the whole of the requisition. Mr. Hastings deigned no answer to this representation; but proceeded to Benares, accused the Rajah of a conspiracy to stir up rebellion, and finally put him under arrest. The Rajah's subjects conceiving their Lord, to whom they were warmly attached, to be in danger, attacked his guards, and forcing their way through them with great slaughter, rescued the Rajah, and conveyed him to a distant place of refuge. Thence he sent a suppliant letter to the Governor-general; to which he made no reply, but attacked the troops of Benares, as if in a state of rebellion, and soon reduced that whole country. The Rajah retired into banishment among the Mahrattas. The expulsion of a proprietor, on specified conditions, for not complying with every demand *beyond* these conditions, (although he had contributed considerably more than the contract stipulated) by no means accorded with the Committee's ideas of justice.

Hastings declared it to be his opinion, that Cheyt-Sing's REBELLION was only a part of a grand combination against the Company. Rumours had spread that the Begums, the grandmother and mother of the Nabob of Oude, were concerned in this conspiracy, and had foment-

ed the insurrection in Benares. Certain *jaghires*, (treasures) had been left by the late Nabob for the support of his widow and mother, and the property had been secured to those Princesses by the guarantee of the Supreme Council of Calcutta. After the expulsion of Cheyt-Sing, the Nabob had met Mr. Hastings at Chunar, and a treaty had been concluded between them, by which the Nabob was *permitted* to resume the *jaghires*,—to seize upon the property of his parents that was bequeathed to them by his father, and guaranteed by the Council, of which the principal member now sanctioned the confiscation. The Nabob acknowledged a very great debt to the Company; and as his mother and grandmother were very rich in money, jewels, and other effects, *their property* was, no doubt, a very efficient and productive fund for the liquidation of *his debts*. It was, besides, alledged, that the Begums were likely to use their treasures to very pernicious purposes. There could not be more effectual means for preventing them from the misapplication of money, than leaving them none to misapply. The payment to the Company of the treasure so confiscated would, no doubt, *add* to the *currency*: it was, therefore, in the view of emolument, a very desirable object. The opinion, that the Begums were likely to make a bad use of their money, had for its support numbers of affidavits, which the Chief-Justice and Mr.

Hastings professed to credit much more than the Committee approved. The matter of the affidavits was chiefly general,—that the Begums were disaffected to the Company; and the evidence hearsay, that it was reported they fomented the rebellion of Cheyt-Sing. No specific proofs were adduced to shew that they were disaffected to the English, fomented the rebellion of the Rajah, or, indeed, that there was any rebellion to foment. Mr Hastings, however, professed to think otherwise; and at last not only *permitted*, but *URGED* the Nabob to seize the property of his mother and grandmother. Mr. Middleton, Hastings's agent in that country, was instructed to insist on the Nabob's resumption of the *jaghires*, and found (to use his own words) *much trifling evasion and puerile excuses* in the Nabob, when admonished to plunder his parents. At length, however, he consented; at least the act was performed, and with such expedition and industry, as to leave the Princesses, before immensely rich, almost without the necessaries of life. The Committee disapproved very highly of the confiscation of the property of the Begums. It is possible, that if a certain witness had been present, and that it had pleased God to allow him the full use of his memory, he might have given to the Committee unequivocal proofs of the purity of the Governor-general's intentions.

It appeared also to the Committee, that praz-

SENTS had been accepted by the Governor-general, although contrary to the orders of his employers and the tenor of his oath.

To his conduct the war with the Mahrattas and with Hyder-Ali were imputed by the Committee.

These were the principal heads (though not all) on which the Committee grounded a report, containing strong disapprobation of Hastings's conduct. The facts were certainly such as to justify very unfavourable notions respecting the equity and even policy of Mr. Hastings's government. He might afterwards refute the charges, or assign satisfactory reasons ; but as they stood, supported by respectable evidence, it was the duty of Burke, and every other member of the Committee, to make the report they did. There is not the shadow of a proof that Burke was actuated by resentment against Hastings ; and if he had, the original object of the Committee did not relate to the Governor general ; he became the object of consideration in the unforeseen progress of inquiry. The result was such, that if Burke was actuated by resentment, duty required the same conduct that resentment would prompt. Mr. Dundas, as chairman of the Committee, brought up the reports. On them was grounded a series of resolutions, condemning, in the most decisive terms, the whole system of Indian politics. The last resolution set forth,

“That Warren Hastings, Esq. Governor-general in Bengal, and William Hornby, Esq. President of the Council at Bombay, having, in sundry instances, acted in a manner repugnant to the honour and policy of this nation, and thereby brought great calamities on India, and enormous expences on the East India Company, it is the duty of the Directors of the said Company to pursue all legal and effectual means for the removal of the said Governor-general and President from their said offices, and to recall them to Great Britain.”

Burke, whose comprehensive mind considered every subject on which it engaged in all its relations of cause, effect, and circumstances, after the inquiry of the Committee, made India more than ever the subject of his attention; and not discovering exculpatory matter to undo the impression made on him, the Committee, and the house, by the narrative of Mr. Hastings's conduct, thought that there was sufficient reason for an impeachment. This he pledged himself to move, when Mr. Hastings's return should enable him to refute false charges. What there was in such conduct, on grounds, till overturned, at least probable, to impute it to the operation of resentment, had the existence of that passion, or even of an adequate cause been proved, it is difficult for an impartial man to discover. If it was resentment, the passion was guided by much

more wisdom, and accompanied by much more justice than it generally admits. Burke waited for an extensive knowledge of facts before he drew a general conclusion, and after he had done so, publicly avowed his resolution ; so that Mr Hastings had the time and means of bringing forward his defence.

I have thought this recapitulation of the rise and progress of the proceedings against Mr. Hastings necessary, to remind those of my readers who have forgotten the circumstances of the case, that THE DISCUSSION OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S CONDUCT WAS NOT OF BURKE'S SEEKING, BUT FORCED ITSELF ON HIM, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER GENTLEMEN, IN THE PERFORMANCE OF A PARLIAMENTARY DUTY FOR WHICH THEY WERE SELECTED.

It is not my intention to enter into the merit or demerit of Hastings, as ascertained after the evidence on both sides had been brought forward. Arguments to prove his innocence would be unnecessary and presumptuous, after its establishment to the satisfaction of the highest court of judicature in the kingdom. An attempt, after such a purgation, to attach guilt to him would be arrogant and indecorous, as it would be setting up the opinion of an individual against the authority of collective wisdom. From the *event of the trial*, compared with the allegations of Burke, many were confirmed in the opinion, that his

object was the persecution of a man whom he knew to be not culpable. Whoever considers the Rohilla war, the administration of the revenues, the presents, the expulsion of Cheyt-Sing, and the seizure of the treasures of the Begums, with the documents, testimonies, and circumstances that appeared to the Committee, and afterwards, even on the trial, may find sufficient grounds for a man, feeling and reasoning as an Englishman, to impute culpability, great culpability, to Mr. Hastings. His subsequent justification of conduct, apparently blameable, does not render the inquirer into these appearances, and very prominent appearances, of wrong the object of censure. A man must judge from probability, and very strong probability, until it is proved not to be true. Apparent culpability is a proper subject of investigation, although, on inquiry, either proof of guilt should be wanting, or innocence be established. We can no more justly blame Burke, Fox, and Sheridan, for moving an impeachment on the chief subjects, and other gentlemen on less important charges, nor the House of Commons for agreeing to the motions, although the Peers afterwards acquitted the defendant, than we should blame an Attorney-general for commencing a prosecution upon the probable grounds of oral and written evidence, or a grand jury for finding a bill, although the person arraigned

should, on his trial, have a verdict in his favour of *Not Guilty*.

Presuming Hastings, therefore, innocent, because NO PROOFS OF THE CONTRARY WERE FOUND BY THE HOUSE OF PEERS, I shall consider the prosecution against him rather as a display of powers than as an evi^ction of truth. Perhaps never a judicial inquiry called forward such an exertion of genius, such an extent of knowledge, such a force and variety of eloquence. The subjects were indeed of the highest importance: the question was, whether or not a man, entrusted with a power that extended over many millions,—a power designed to be exercised for the joint advantage of its subjects and its bestowers,—was employed for the advantage or hurt of either or both? Whether Mr. Hastings, invested by the India Company with an authority which rendered the interests of that commercial body and the happiness of the most extensive and populous countries in a great measure dependent on his wisdom and will, had been, on the whole, the author of good or the dispenser of misery? The matter to be determined was not whether a *small island had been plundered by its prætor, †a speculation and oppression, which, if true, from the vicinity of the province to the supreme power, ‡

* Sicily, † Verres, ‡ Rome.

could be soon punished and easily redressed ; but whether a multiplicity of large nations had been pillaged, desolated, and destroyed by the Governor ; a peculation and oppression, much more enormous, because the trust was so much more important ; the miseries inflicted by its breach must be much more extended ; and from the extent of the sufferings and remoteness of the scenes, redress would be impracticable. The exposure of enormities, which might have taken place in such circumstances, and were alledged to have actually taken place, required most persevering industry and the greatest ability. Both they occupied. When we consider that, for several years, the conduct of Mr. Hastings employed a great part of the intellectual exertions of Sheridan and Fox, and a much greater portion of those of Burke,—and that, in fact, no material delinquency was proved against the object of the frequent and reiterated attacks of so extraordinary force and perseverance,—can we refrain from thinking these operations, respecting *their professed object*, a WASTE OF GENIUS ?—a waste unparalleled in the annals of intellectual effort. If Hastings had been really guilty, their time would have been mispent, because they did not bring the proofs to demonstrate that guilt to the judges— if really innocent, their powers and labours were misemployed in endeavouring to prove what was not to be proved.

The friends of Hastings very injudiciously and uncandidly ascribed bad or frivolous motives to the chief men on both sides of the house who voted for the impeachment. Their assertions or constructions, however, prove nothing against the propriety of the measure. It was very easy to assert that Burke was actuated by resentment; that Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Courtenay, and other leading members of Opposition, merely wished to gratify Burke; or that Pitt, Dundas, Grenville, and other leading men of Administration, were actuated by jealousy of the influence of Hastings. It requires no great ability to assign bad motives; and besides, the motives, even were they proved to be bad, would not affect the truth or falsehood of any proposition which they might dictate. If we believe a friend to be innocent, and able to prove his innocence, we are very imprudent, and indeed very foolish, in resting his exculpation on any thing extrinsic.

Although I certainly must consider the wonderful eloquence displayed during the proceedings respecting Hastings as eventually a waste of genius, yet I am far from meaning to say, that at the time it was a wrong direction of talents. Besides, the speeches of the great orators contain a very uncommon portion of the wisest general observations. The opening speech of Burke on the modes of bringing a public delinquent to justice, on the character

and situation of the accuser, and the motives by which he ought to be actuated, exhibit at once a most extensive knowledge of the crown law of this kingdom, of the science of jurisprudence, and of ethics in general ; and in that view, without considering its reference to Mr. Hastings, it combines legal information and moral instruction. His speech on the Rohilla war unites a most complete acquaintance with the Roman policy in the management of distant provinces, and that of modern Europe, to the wisest and most liberal principles respecting that department of government. His eloquence, if it did not prove the points he wished to establish concerning Hastings, and was in that view a waste of genius, yet contains facts, images, sentiments, and philosophy, that render it delightful and estimable.

That mind which could itself produce such astonishing intellectual efforts, paid the just tribute of praise to extraordinary exhibitions of genius in others. On the celebrated speech of Sheridan on the Begum charge, he bestowed the following very high, but not exaggerated panegyric.

“ He has this day surprised the thousands, who hung with rapture on his accents, by such an array of talents, such an exhibition of capacity, such a display of powers, as are unparalleled in the annals of oratory ; a display that reflected the highest honour upon himself—lus-

tre upon letters—renown upon parliament—glory upon the country. Of all species of rhetoric, of every kind of eloquence that has been witnessed or recorded, either in ancient or modern times ; whatever the acuteness of the bar, the dignity of the senate, the solidity of the judgment-seat, and the sacred morality of the pulpit, have hitherto furnished, nothing has surpassed, nothing has equalled what we have heard this day in Westminster-Hall. No holy seer of religion, no sage, no statesman, no orator, no man of any literary description whatever, has come up, in the one instance, to the pure sentiments of morality, or, in the other, to that variety of knowledge, force of imagination, propriety and vivacity of allusion, beauty and elegance of diction, strength and copiousness of style, pathos and sublimity of conception, to which we have this day listened with ardour and admiration. From poetry, up to eloquence, there is not a species of composition, of which a complete and perfect specimen might not, from that single speech, be culled and collected.”

After quoting this encomium, Mr. McCormick makes the following observations, which require animadversion. “ How sweet is praise, when uttered by the lips of eloquence ! Yet sweeter still, when it flows from the heart of sincerity ! But Mr. Burke’s language, on this occasion, was dictated by artifice. The near ob-

servers of his sentiments and emotions could perceive that he felt himself surpassed by Mr. Sheridan in all the favourite walks of his own genius; that the canker-worm of envy had gnawed its way into his bosom; and that he strove to conceal its sharp corrosion under the shew of the most zealous and liberal applause."

There is nothing easier than to assign bad motives, but their existence is to be proved by something more convincing than mere assertion. Is there any evidence that Sheridan was the object of envy to Burke? Mr. McCormick adduces none. There is, therefore, only his affirmation, to which a negative is an equivalent. But, as a matter of verisimilitude, what is there in the relative talents, character, and situation of both, that could render it probable that Sheridan is, no doubt, a man of great genius and great eloquence; but is there any thing in his genius or eloquence, the superiority of which could gnaw the mind of Burke? Let an impartial reader peruse the speeches and consider the efforts of both, and answer this question: let him read the most admired productions of that very admirable orator, and let him compare them with the speeches of Burke on American taxation, on reconciliation, on economy, on the India-bill, on the opening of the charges against Hastings, and let him shew to Burke that inferiority which only can be the

cause of envy. From the manner in which Mr. M'Cormick expresses himself, it would appear, that it was parliamentary eloquence in which Sheridan displayed such powers as to mortify Burke. But could he be supposed to be so ignorant of his own extraordinary talents, as to be mortified by the exhibition of very great talents in any one? If the perception of very great parliamentary abilities in another was to fill the breast of Burke with jealousy and rage, that cause must have existed respecting another person of his own party certainly as much as concerning Sheridan. No man can admire the force and versatility of Sheridan's genius more than I; but certain I am that I do not under-rate it, when I think, that a man could not envy his senatorial powers, who would not envy those of Fox; and there is neither proof nor any allegation that Burke did so. If literary talents were to excite the envy of Burke, was there any man he knew in that species of excellence superior to the Litchfield sage? And there was never the smallest evidence, nor, indeed, insinuation, that Burke envied Johnson. Was there any thing in the situation of Sheridan, that could corrode the breast of Burke? Were situation to be always proportionate to abilities, both were in a condition much less exalted than their elevated genius—but Sheridan was not higher than Burke. In the esteem of those whose opinion they

would both think the most valuable, was Sheridan above Burke? Was he more highly praised by the Duke of Portland, Earl Fitzwilliam, and others of the highest-rank of their friends; or by Mr. Windham, Mr. Fox, and others of the highest talents? In the opinion of the world Sheridan did not stand higher. Thus, there existed no cause which could render it probable that Burke was actuated by such a passion. Mr. M'Cornick brings no proof, from Burke's words or actions, that he was envious of Sheridan. Unsupported by proof, and contrary to probability, this injurious charge against the character of a most extraordinary personage falls to the ground:—it is a charge that the liberal and great mind of Sheridan himself could not believe to be well founded.

The commercial treaty with France first occupied parliament during the succeeding session. This treaty, believed to be the result of the extensive information of Hawkesbury, the acuteness and diplomatic knowledge of Eden, ministering to the comprehensive genius of Pitt, was considered in two relations,—commercial and political. As to its mercantile arrangements, it was the triumph of commercial philosophy over usage, and of a general over partial interest. It was a practical application of the principles and demonstrations of Smith concerning the reciprocal advantages, to skilful and industrious nations, of a free trade. The dis-

the real circumstances of the case, we shall find discussions of the treaty, both in the House of Peers and Commons, called forward the most important subjects of œconomical science. Its political object was liberal and great,—it was to terminate the animosities between Britain and France, that had been productive of so great evils to both. Whether it was or was not attainable, it is now impossible to ascertain, as the circumstances are so totally changed. It was to its political tendency that the principal opposition was made. Fox endeavoured to shew, that France still continued her plans of ambition, although she varied her modes of execution. While amusing us, he said, with commercial connections, she was, by the increase of her marine, and her intrigues with foreign states, preparing for political annoyance. This ground was also taken by Burke. He had, at the commencement of the American war, and on every other occasion, endeavoured to impress on the house and nation the aspiring views of France,—that the supremacy over Europe and its dependencies was the object; that Britain was the most formidable opponent to her aggrandizement; that the humiliation of Britain was considered as the necessary, and, indeed, only means of certainly accomplishing her ends; that the animosity of rivalry inspired the operations of ambition; that the mutual action and re-action of these principles had, on every

opportunity, manifested themselves. The doctrine he held before, the doctrine he held then, the doctrine he held since, the doctrine he held always, was the same—Trust no friendly protestations from France—France hates Britain; France would subject Britain; FRANCE HAS THE WILL TO CONQUER BRITAIN, BUT WANTS THE POWER. LET US GUARD AGAINST INCREASING HER POWER AND INFLUENCE, THROUGH SUPINENESS OR CREDULITY, WHOSE INTENTIONS ARE SO MALIG-NANT. A few months afforded a striking instance, that while her professions were friendly, her intentions were hostile; that she was employing every effort of policy to detach from us our natural ally; and was preparing to second her intrigues by force, when the vigour of the British cabinet and the activity of Prussian troops defeated her machinations.

In Mr. Pitt's motion for the consolidation of the Customs Opposition unanimously acquiesced, and Burke bestowed on it very high praise.

March 28, 1787, a motion was made for repealing the Test-act. Although Burke had been, in 1772, favourable to a similar motion in behalf of the Dissenters (though a motion not altogether to the same extent) he did not support * the repeal. His detractors charged him with inconsistency for this conduct. But if we examine

* He withdrew from the house without voting.

no inconsistency in the support at one time, disapprobation at another ; and that both were guided by liberal and sound policy. Indulgence to a part was wise and benevolent, when not interfering with the good of the whole. In 1772, there were among the Dissenters no *known* principles inimical to our establishment. Before 1787, principles unfavourable to the constitution of our state had been published by their leading men, and had been reprobated, as was before shewn, by Burke ; not only principles, but designs hostile to our church establishment had been avowed by a most distinguished person among them. “ They were (Dr. Priestley informed the public, in a pamphlet) wisely placing, as it were, grain by grain, a train of gunpowder, to which the match would one day be laid to blow up the fabric of error, which could never be again raised upon the same foundation.” This declaration by a MINER was a sufficient reason and prudence for keeping him and his connections at such a distance from our fabric as to prevent the intended explosion.* From their recent conduct and de-

* The sanguineness of Priestley’s temper here prevailed over his wisdom. It was certainly very unwise to tell the supporters of the church, who were, by far, the more powerful body, that he designed to subdue them ; he could not hope thereby to intimidate them to submission, but might expect to put them on their guard. The loquacious exul-

clarations, Burke saw a danger in encouraging the Dissenters, which he could not have seen at a former period, because it did not exist.

Pitt, although he, from the philosophical enlargement of an enlightened mind, had been friendly to the Dissenters, when he considered the differences between them and the church as being merely about speculative points, yet, when he saw proceedings intended to subvert so important a part of our polity, thought circumspection and vigilance absolutely necessary. When there was an avowed design to sap the fortress, it became the duty of the garrison to secure the out posts. Lord North, in opposing the appeal, besides the consideration of general expediency, by which men of such minds as Burke and Pitt are influenced in political conduct, had the additional motives of particular notions. He was, though not a bigotted, a strenuous high-churchman, had uniformly opposed the Dissenters merely when maintaining articles contrary to his belief, with-

tation of anticipated success is often a most powerful obstacle to its attainment. Conspiracies, that would have eluded the penetration of wisdom, have been exposed by the premature triumph of ringleaders and accomplices; no doubt such exposure, though even by the most ingenious and learned man, is foolish. Hence we may learn how absurd their reasoning is, who in any case infer innocence, merely because the alledged operation of guilt would imply folly.

out cherishing designs subversive to the constitution which he supported.

As Lord North and Burke were both men of great classical erudition, and very frequently introduced quotations from ancient authors, they sometimes had friendly disputes concerning some of the passages. Burke had studied ancient language merely as a vehicle of ancient ideas. Lord North, besides studying it for the purpose which general reason dictates, was thoroughly acquainted with it in the way which local usage prescribes: having been taught at Eton, he was perfectly instructed in the metrical parts. One day, Burke having occasion to use the Latin word *vectīgal*, pronounced it vectīgal: Lord North told him it should be vectīgal. Burke proposed a bet of a guinea: Lord North agreed, and of course gained. In the prosody of the language, both the Scotch and Irish are, no doubt, much inferior to the English; and we hear mistakes as to quantity from some of the ablest and most learned men among them which an English boy would detect. I remember once to have heard some Latin conversation between a very respectable master of an academy near London, esteemed among the best scholars in the profession, and one of the first literary Scotchmen of the age; both spoke the language with fluency and propriety in other respects, but the latter not in point of prosody. It was with difficulty that the master

of the academy convinced the learned Doctor that he was not erroneous in pronouncing *confēro*, *confēro*. Although he has manifested himself to the world to be most intimately and profoundly conversant in the history, character, genius, customs, manners, laws, and politics of the Romans, yet was he inaccurate in their sounds; although few *men* in England could equal him writing *sense* prose, ye many *boys* might surpass him in writing *nonsense* verses.

Little, except the impeachment of Hastings engaged the political attention of Burke until the time of the REGENCY.

To dwell upon the melancholy event that rendered a plan of Regency necessary, would be extremely absurd, indecorous, and unfeeling. It, however, in the alarm during the calamity and the joy at the recovery of the personage whom it had pleased Heaven to afflict, manifested how highly he was prized by his people.

On its being ascertained that a temporary incapacity existed for exercising the functions of government, Mr. Fox's idea was, that during this incapacity there was virtually a demise of the Crown; that therefore the next heir should assume the powers of government whilst the incapacity continued. Mr. Pitt's opinion was, that in such a case it rested with parliament to supply the deficiency, as in other circumstances not before provided for by the existing laws.

Great ability was displayed on both sides ; but as the necessity for its exertion on that subject soon ceased, I shall not enter into its details. Much obloquy was attached to Burke on account of the violence of his conduct, and still more, of his expressions. Impartial truth obliges me to acknowledge that his language was very intemperate ; it was indeed so much so as to excite the blame of his friends and associates. In estimating character, however, we must take THE WHOLE *of action*, not PART *of expression*. Burke conceived that it was the intention of Ministry to make the Regent dependent on a party, of which they were the heads ; and certainly displayed very extraordinary abilities in opposing their plans, whether they were selfish or patriotic. “ There was (he said) a partition of power, in which the Prince was destined to have an official, a mere nominal character ; while all the places and real dignities were given to another. This partition was more odious and offensive than the famous Partition Treaty, relative to the succession, on the death of the last Prince of the house of Austria. It was a partition founded on the most wicked and malicious principle : every thing that was degrading and restrictive, every thing that could stamp suspicion and indignity on the Prince’s character, was implied in what the bill withheld from him ; while, on the other hand, all that was

graceful, all that was calculated to hold up a character as great, as virtuous, and meritorious, was given where an opposition was set up to counteract the Executive Government." Burke's intemperance in debate appeared, perhaps, more during the Regency discussion than at any other time. Once, when he was called to order, he made the following reply: "Order is an admirable thing, perfect in all its limbs, only unfortunately it squints, and wants the aid of some expert oculist to enable it to see straight. I also wish to preserve the utmost delicacy; but delicacy, though a being of perfect symmetry like the former, is only a subsidiary virtue, and ought always to give way to truth, where the case was such, that the truth was infinitely of more consequence than the delicacy." Burke drew up the questions addressed to Mr. Gill, the Lord Mayor, containing very bitter invectives against Administration. He also wrote an answer to Mr. Pitt's letter to the Prince of Wales. Indeed he, however reprehensible in the violence of his expressions, displayed his talents during the Regency bills fully as much as at any other period of his life. The view he took of circumstances and proceedings was great and comprehensive, whether just or not; if there were too frequently sallies of passion, there was always effusion of genius.

While the Regency was the subject of serious consideration in parliament, it occasioned several very humorous compositions out of doors. Of these, the Regency Cauldron, in imitation of that of Macbeth's witches, was the most distinguished. So forcible, indeed, was its humour, and brilliant its wit, that by many it was imputed either to Courtenay or Sheridan. There were, indeed, a number of very laughable and ingenious writings subsequent to the Rolliade and Birth-day Odes; such as the Cabinet Stud, Royal Recollections, and many others. On the side of Opposition there was certainly greater versatility and variety of powers than on the side of Ministry. For Administration there were extensive knowledge, comprehensive understanding, strong reasoning, masculine and dignified eloquence; there were industry and practical ability in the conduct of affairs. In the other party, there were, besides the materials and powers of serious reasoning and eloquence, the materials and powers of sportive exhibitions. From the one you could derive information and instruction: from the other, information, instruction, and entertainment. In both you met with the equals of Cicero and Demosthenes. In the Minority you met with Congreve and Swift. Burke, who was one of the wittiest of men himself, was also the cause of wit in others, as "Simkins's Letters to his Brother Simon in Wales" can testify.

This versified attack on Burke's proceedings against Hastings made its first appearance in "The World," a fashionable paper of the day, conducted by Edward Topham, Esq; the same gentleman, I believe, who before *undertook* to answer Burke's "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol." "The World" teemed with paragraphs, apparently intended to be severe on the conduct of the Managers of Hastings's trial, and especially on Burke. The strictures on that subject, both in prose and verse, were usually very inferior to "Simkins's Letters." The composition of "The World" * was evidently that of a mind by no means congenial, either in taste or genius, to Burke's. It was not surprising that the author of turgid phraseology and pompous inanity; frivolous conceits and declamatory rant, should disrelish beauty, sublimity, knowledge, and philosophy.

Burke frequently spent a considerable part of the recess either in visiting Ireland, or dif-

* About the same time that "The World" was so much distinguished for sonorous trifles in prose, there was an inundation of verse of the same species, under the signature of *Della Crusca*, *Anna Matilda*, *Laura Maria*, and others, of whose writings the leading characteristics were reciprocity of extravagant compliment, multiplicity of superfluous epithet, and abundance of melodious nonsense. The vigorous and severe satire of Gifford, by his *Mæviad*, either silenced these versifiers, or gave their talents (such as they were) a different direction.

ferent parts of this kingdom. Some years before the period of his life at which I am now arrived (to the best of my recollection in 1785), Mr. Windham and he took a jaunt to Scotland: they rode their own horses, went by Edinburgh, and proceeded northward to the Highlands. Though Burke, like his friend Johnson, delighted chiefly in the exhibition of the human mind in its constitution and diversity of operations, he also was much delighted with external appearances of nature. Passing through Athol,—a district of Perthshire, watered by the Tay and its tributary rivers, and abounding in picturesque scenery, variegated from the verdant sweetness of cultivated vallies, and of woods interspersed with streams, and divided by a majestic river, to the bare rocks and heathy mountains of the Grampians,—they viewed Dunkeld and Blair, seats of the Duke of Athol, by art and nature wonderfully fitted to gratify a taste for the BEAUTIFUL and SUBLIME. Coming to a country inn, they were much struck with the beauty and elegant manners of the landlord's daughters. The father, they found, was a gentleman, the representative of a respectable family, but of small fortune; and that in order to enable him to give his children a good education, to supply the deficiency of his patrimony, he had had recourse to industry. Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham were very much pleased with the conversation of the young ladies; and from

the first town they came to, sent them a copy of Cecilia ; a present at once a high compliment to the taste of the young ladies and the genius of the author ; and which they prized very highly, coming from such donors. One of the Misses M'Laren (that was their name) was soon married to a gentleman in the neighbourhood. The younger, some years after, married a medical gentleman who procured an appointment in India. The following circumstance is said to have produced the appointment and accelerated the marriage. Mr. Dundas, riding from his hunting-seat in Strathern, to visit the Duke of Athol at Blair, stopped at the inn. Accosting Miss M'Laren with his usual gallantry, and bestowing high and just praises on her beauty, he said, " he was surprised that so fine a girl had not got a husband." " Sir," replied she, " my marriage depends upon you. " On me, how so ? " " There is," she answered, " a young gentleman, to whom I am under promise of marriage as soon as circumstances will permit. He has been in the shipping service of the East India Company, and wishes to procure a settlement in Bengal, as an intimate friend of his, Mr. Dick, married to my eldest sister, is one of the principal surgeons in Calcutta, and would have it in his power very effectually to serve him in his business." Mr. Dundas, having, on inquiry, found that Mr. M'Nabb (the gentle-

man in question) was a man of merit and professional skill, on his return to London sent him permission to go to India. The marriage was concluded: soon after they sailed; and are now established at Patna.

Crossing the Tumel, where, near its confluence with the Tay, it forms the beautiful peninsula of Logerait, the travellers proceeded, through Strath Tay, to Taymouth, the seat of the Earl of Breadalbane, one of the grandest scenes in the Highlands. Continuing their route by the banks of Loch-Tay, towards Inverary, they one evening came to an inn, near a church yard: amusing themselves with reading the inscriptions on the tomb-stones, they were addressed by a gentleman in a clerical habit, who, after some conversation, requested their company to drink tea at the parsonage house. They complied, engaging their host to return with them to the inn to supper. They discovered Dr. M'Intire, the clergyman, to be a man of much information, excellent sense, and peculiarly conversant in the history and actual state of the Highlands. They perceived also, that he was well acquainted with the affairs of India, where he had a son in a high situation. Burke, who understood the Irish language, spoke to Dr. M'Intire in that tongue. He was answered in Erse; and they understood each other in many instances, from the similarity of these two dialects of the ancient Celtic. The

Doctor shewed him an Irish Bible, and informed him that there had been no translation of the Scriptures into Erse till about twenty years before : that there was a version of the Testament published by the clergyman of the adjoining parish (through which the gentlemen had passed) Mr. Stewart of Killin ; and that that gentleman, in conjunction with two of his sons, and with the assistance of other clergymen, of whom Dr. M'Intire himself was one, was preparing a translation of the Old Testament. * Burke expected, and perceived, that his host's notions concerning both the authenticity and merit of Ossian by no means coincided with the opinion which he himself had formed. Burke, indeed, admitted that there might be songs in the Erse descriptive of heroes and their actions, as there are, in the Irish, and in all languages ; but denied that there was any evidence to prove that a regular epic poem had ever appeared in that tongue ; and denied

* How far this work is now advanced I have not heard. The chief conductor was Dr. Stewart of Luss, in Dumbar-tonshire, son to the translator of the Testament. It may have, perhaps, received interruption from the death of his father and brother. It would be of peculiar advantage at the present momentous season to have a translation of the Bible into the Erse tongue, in order to counteract the malignant efforts of disseminators of infidelity, who have published among the Highlanders versions of Paine's works, and similar productions.

also that the poems, asserted by Mr. Macpherson to be translated from it, in whatever language they had been originally composed, possessed that excellence which Scotch critics ascribed to them. He thought that these, in their strictures upon Ossian, were guided more by national prejudice than by that vigorous investigating genius by which they were generally distinguished.

Mr. M'Cormick, in speaking of the trial of Hastings, endeavours to shew that Burke made a *job* of it for the benefit of his own particular friends. That Burke exerted himself to serve those whom he loved and regarded, no one will deny. He procured for his brother, Richard, the Collectorship of Grenada, during the first administration of Lord Rockingham, and the appointment of Secretary to the Treasury in the last. When member for Bristol, his influence got the Recordership of that city for his brother also. Richard Burke was a man of very considerable abilities: he was engaged in several publications, and had even by some persons been deemed one of the authors of Junius. Letters that appeared in the Public Advertiser, signed *Valens*, during the American war; were supposed to be written by Richard; with the assistance of William, who afterwards went to India. Meanwhile Richard was studying law, and was called to the bar the same year with Mr. Erskine. He was acquiring reputation,

and was highly thought of by Lord Mansfield. His rising character, and the opinion of that eminent man, began to procure him considerable business, when he was appointed Secretary to the Treasury. The duties of his new office interrupted that close application to the law, which might in time, have raised him to a high rank in his profession. But, as from his acceptance of that employment, it was presumed that political exertions more than juridical were his object, after his loss of office he did not recover his former business as a Counsellor. Still, however, he was esteemed by professional men as a lawyer of great knowledge and talents. As such he was entitled to employment. On the impeachment of Hastings he was recommended by his brother to be one of the Counsel. Is a man blameable for endeavouring to promote a person to an employment, for which he is fit, because that person is his brother? If he is, Burke deserves censure. Burke also proposed Dr. Lawrence to be one of the Counselors. Dr. Lawrence had displayed great literary talents, both in humorous and serious productions. In addition to his general talents, he was known to be a man of professional industry and ability. Was it a reason, that a person should not be proposed by another to fill an office for which he was fit, because he was the proposer's friend? If that was the case, Burke was to blame. Speaking farther of the

Counsel in the prosecution of Hastings; Mr. M'Cormick says, "Mr. Burke also took care to introduce his own son into this *profitable job*, as soon as he was called to the bar." The answer to this assertion is very short:—Mr. Burke's son was NOT introduced to this *profitable job*.—The proof that he was not is the RECORD OF THE TRIAL.

Mr. M'Cormick mentions a report that Burke was a *marriage-broker*, and received a considerable sum of money for effecting an union between the Earl of Inchiquin and Miss Palmer, the niece and heiress of Sir Joshua Reynolds. Although he declares his disbelief of this rumour, he speaks of it in such a way as tends rather to accredit it, to those, at least, who should take assertion or insinuation for proof. A report (if such a report existed, which I do not know, as I never heard of it) totally inconsistent with the character of its subject, and supported by no evidence, requires no discussion. Most of these reports and insinuations are associated with the straitened circumstances of Burke; as if it were a necessary consequence, that, because a man is not rich, he will therefore be guilty of roguery.

Burke certainly was far from being attentive to pecuniary concerns: although totally free from the extravagance of profligacy, he was habitually liable to the waste of inattention. He neither gamed, nor indulged in debauchery;

yet he spent a great deal of money, and was often embarrassed. His great mind did not value riches, which he saw could be acquired by the meanest talents and qualities. Judging rightly in not considering money as a constituent of excellence, he acted wrongly in not sufficiently valuing it as an article of use. As a wise man, thinking the possession of money to be no proof of merit, he too much neglected it as an instrument of convenience. He had not a practical impression of the very plain and obvious truth, that, though a weak and ignorant man is not one whit less weak and ignorant for his possessions, a wise and learned man may render his wisdom and learning still more pleasing and useful to others, and himself, with, than without a competent fortune; that although wealth ought not to add to the importance of any individual with others deriving no good from it, it is very comfortable to the possessor. Besides, even if he had valued money as much as prudence required, his generosity was so great, that it would most powerfully have counteracted the effects of this valuation. His detractors say that he did not patronize indigent merit: numberless instances might be adduced to prove the contrary. He not only patronized merit, and sheltered it from those attacks which it might otherwise "from the unworthy take;" but he relieved distress wherever he found it, even although in objects

not peculiarly meritorious. His political connections, besides, led to very great expences, both in his general mode of living and in special contributions. There have been several imputations of unjustifiable means used by him to recruit his frequently exhausted finances; but there is no evidence of either the truth of such assertions, or the justness of such suspicions. Wanting probability in his general character, and proof as to particular acts, they will be more or less readily believed by different persons, according to their consciousness of what they have done themselves, or conception of what they would do in such a situation.

Occasional difficulties in his affairs did not prevent his philosophic mind from enjoying very great happiness in the exercise of the kindest affections to his friends and family. No man, indeed, could be a warmer friend, a more indulgent master, a more affectionate father, and a fonder husband; no one was, in all his actions, more influenced by his private connections, unless duty interfered.

His desire of extending the means of beneficial conduct made him bestow attention on practical medicine, and he frequently made up prescriptions. He once, in an attempt of this sort, involved himself in very great unhappiness for several hours. Mrs. Burke having been indisposed, her husband undertook to make up a draught ordered by the

physician ; but unfortunately mistaking one phial for another, he gave her laudanum. The mistake being immediately discovered by examining the other phial, efficacious antidotes were applied ; and the lady, after undergoing much torture from the conflicting operation, to the inexpressible terror and horror of her husband, at length recovered.

Burke lost, in his eminent friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, almost the last of the literary and convivial associates of his early years. Sir Joshua had always regarded Burke as the first of men, and was in turn loved, esteemed, and respected by his illustrious friend. He had assisted him when embarrassed, and, by his will, after cancelling a bond for 2000*l.* bequeathed him 2000*l.* more. The orator and painter were so often together, and the fulness of Burke's mind ran in such abundance, force, and clearness, that Sir Joshua must have remembered many of his ideas, and even expressions. At the opening of the Royal Academy, Jan. 2, 1769, Sir Joshua, the President, delivered a discourse on the object of the institution and the principles of painting. At the annual distribution of prizes, he also thereafter delivered an oration on similar subjects. The ingenuity of the reflections, the extent of the knowledge, and the elegance of the composition, made them supposed by some to be the productions of genius more exclusively devoted to literary efforts than

Sir Joshua's. They were, at one time, imputed to Dr Johnson. Admitting the just and philosophical view exhibited by Mr. Courtenay of the influence of that great man's intellectual exertions on literary composition, readers had no evidence that he actually assisted the painter in composing his essays. From his intercourse with Johnson it was probable that he derived knowledge and principles which may have been transfused into his discourses. But neither testimony, nor the internal evidence of the works themselves, are in favour of the supposition that they were written by Johnson. Mr. M'Cormick thinks they must have been written by Burke; and internal evidence is certainly much more in favour of his hypothesis than of the former. Burke was much more conversant in the fine arts than his friend Johnson. But there is the testimony of Mr. Malone, who had every opportunity, as the constant companion of Sir Joshua, to be informed of the truth during Sir Joshua's life; and as his executor, from the perusal of papers after his death, who had the best means (if any one could have them) of not being deceived himself, and could have no motive to deceive others, positively asserts that they were the composition of Sir Joshua himself. Agreeing, therefore, in the probability, *a priori*, of Mr. M'Cormick's supposition, I think it overturned in fact by the evidence of Mr. Malone. Burke was one of the chief mourners at his

friend's funeral. An account of the procession was drawn up by Mr. Burke and Mr. Malóne. The following sketch of his character, composed by Burke, was also published. " His illness was long, but borne with a mild and chearful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenor of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution ; and he contemplated it with that entire composure, which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness had, indeed, well deserved.

" SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS was, indeed, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters of the renowned ages. In portrait he went far beyond them ; for he communicated to that description of the art, in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity, derived from the higher branches, which even those, who professed them in a superior manner, did not.

always preserve, when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of History, and the amenity of Landscape. In painting portraits; he appeared not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to be derived from his paintings.

“ He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

“ In full assurance of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinizing eye, in any part of his conduct or discourse.

“ His talents of every kind, powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters, his social virtues in all the relations and all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to excite some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be

felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow." Perhaps the history of eloquence does not afford a more masterly instance of panegyric than this which I have just quoted ; at once general and appropriate, compressed and complete ; exhibiting, in a few words, the constituents, operations, and effects of its subject's characteristic excellence.

Not long before Burke was deprived of his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds, another gentleman, who had once been very intimate with him, endeavoured to renew their intercourse. Mr. Gerrard Hamilton had always retained a very warm regard for Mr. Burke. He fully admitted his reasons for discontinuing their political connection, and uniformly praised the letter that Burke wrote on the occasion, as one of the finest compositions he had ever perused. He venerated the disinterestedness that had resigned the pension. His admiration of the talents of his late friend rose higher and higher as they more fully unfolded themselves, and many of his exhibitions he contemplated with astonishment. When the abilities of Fox, more exclusively parliamentary, raised him to be the leader of Opposition, Hamilton said, " In parliament only would Mr. Fox be the first man ; in parliament only would Mr. Burke not be the first man." The discriminating mind of Hamilton distinguished between that combination of cognitive and active powers that fits

the possessor for *leading* men, and those intellectual powers and attainments which fit the possessor for *delighting, informing, and instructing* men; between a Themistocles and a Socrates, a Demosthenes and a Homer, a Cecil and a Bacon. Hamilton did not enter much into any of the political parties during the American war, nor afterwards. He was, indeed, supposed to have been the author of some, at least of one of the letters of Junius, from the well known circumstance of his having, one morning, very accurately discussed to a nobleman the merits of a letter that he conceived to be that day in the Public Advertiser, which he had not then seen; and that it was found afterwards that the insertion of the letter had been that day neglected, but the next morning appeared in it, and was exactly what he had described. His knowledge of it, antecedent to publication, proves that he either wrote it himself, or had been informed of it by the author. This inference, however, applies to that letter only; and if he embraced any party, he did not publicly embrace it with ardour. As an impartial observer, he perceived the tendency of measures more accurately than those who were actively engaged. When Mr. Fox brought forward his East-India bill, Hamilton immediately saw that the project of administering the commercial and territorial affairs of the Company by a junto, (however individually

respectable) appointed by the proposer, would alarm the court, and turn the supporters of the bill out of office. He advised some of the members of the coalition party to dissuade the leaders from persisting in their plan. Mr Sheridan, Mr. Courtenay, and several other men of high rank in the party, are understood to have privately signified their apprehensions of the consequences; and recommended to the Ministers to leave the management of their commercial concerns to the Company, as some of the Directors had, on that condition, intimated an acquiescence in the rest of the scheme. The advice of Hamilton, and the representation of those members, had not the desired effect. The consequence was as Hamilton had predicted. Soon after the Regency, he expressed an eager desire that Burke and he should return to the footing of former times. Mr. Courtenay, who was very intimate with both, was one of those who signified to Burke the wish of Hamilton. Burke said that there were several circumstances which would render it impossible for him to have the same pleasure in the company of Hamilton that he had formerly felt; and that he thought, without that, their meeting would not answer any purpose to either. It does not appear that Burke meant to throw any blame on Hamilton himself: but their separation had caused much obloquy, (though very unjustly) that made a great im-

pression on the sensibility of Burke, in so much that though he knew it not to proceed from Hamilton, he could not help associating that gentleman with a subject of uneasiness and displeasure.

I have carried the private history of Mr. Burke somewhat farther than his public, as I am now coming to a momentous subject of his inquiry and portion of his conduct, the series of which I did not wish to interrupt.

Soon after the close of the Regency deliberation commenced the

FRENCH REVOLUTION.

To enable us to estimate the conduct and reasoning of Burke respecting the French revolution, it is necessary to recall to our minds the old government; the causes and operations that produced and effected a change; the change itself; the actual state of opinions, sentiments, and affairs, after it had taken place. From the consideration of these subjects only can it be evinced, whether Burke's proceedings were or were not conformable to wisdom and rectitude. Subordinate to this general subject of discussion is the more special inquiry, whether they were or were not consonant to his former principles and actions? The object of the first inquiry is THE INTEGRITY OF HIS INTELLECTUAL AND MORAL EXERTIONS, relatively to most mo-

mentous concerns of a great portion of mankind, whether his plans and counsels tended to the melioration of the human race: of the second, whether he has been CONSISTENT WITH HIMSELF. The criterion of the former is the nature and tendency of the French revolution; of the latter, his own antecedent principles, declarations, and conduct.

The legitimate object of government is the general good. That government is the best, which produces, FROM PERMANENT CAUSES, the greatest good, and least evil, to those within the sphere of its operation. That this is the true test by which to examine any system of polity, both in its principles and practical effects, will, I believe, be very generally granted. If we weigh the old government of France in this scale, it will be conceded by every impartial man, that it was deplorably wanting. Perfection, indeed, is to be expected in no system formed by man; but there are gradations of excellence in human contrivances. There have been many plans of polity, and there are several, in which the general good has been and is much more steadily and successfully pursued than under the old government of France, which he would misname, that should call it any thing else but a despotism. Instead of making a part subservient to the whole; of estimating either permanent regulations or temporary measures by the aggregate of happiness they were calculated

to produce, the pleasure and caprice of a very small part was the motive and rule for governing the whole. The comfort and welfare of twenty millions was of no account when compared with the freak or fancy of the despot, the interest or inclination of his favourites, and the instruments of his despotism. The suggestion of a priest or a prostitute would desolate a province, and drive from the country its most industrious inhabitants. In the earlier ages, France had some semblance of a limited constitution. The monarch himself had his power sufficiently, and more than sufficiently, restrained by the feudal aristocracy; but even then, it was a liberty confined to individuals, not extending to the community at large; effecting therefore partial superiority, and not general benefit. The feudal aristocracy was destroyed by Richelieu, and the separate despotisms consolidated into one entire mass. The following picture of the state of the people, under such a government, though glowing, is not exaggerated.

“ During 175 years (from 1614 to 1789,) France had been without even the appearance of a voice in the direction of her own most momentous concerns. Every thing was under the controul of a government, that had no other means for the support of its authority but corruption and cruelty. The people were studiously depressed by ignorance, by poverty, and

extortion. The men of wealth and distinction were purchased either by the baubles of courtly ostentation, or by a lavish waste of the public revenue. They were rewarded with the most iniquitous and incredible of all institutions, an exemption in some sort from the duty of contributing to that revenue, which was endeavoured to be exclusively wrung from the grasp of the poor, the weak, and the laborious. They were prevailed upon to countenance, by being admitted into a partnership of the use of arbitrary imprisonment, punishment without an accusation and without a hearing, and the confinement of the Bastille. In vain would the reader expect from us, in this place, the instructive display of all the multiplied engines of Gallic despotism; the army of spies, perpetually employed by government, and intruding themselves into all the haunts of men; the mode of deciding juridical questions, without pretending to submit them to the sentiment of an impartial jury, without confronting witnesses with each other or the accused; nay, with the audacious and uncontrolled practice of the judge to admit the private solicitations of the parties at issue. By the feudal institutions that prevailed, the peasant was rendered, like the ox, the mere property of his superiors; and the tyranny of the lord was only suspended and checked by the tyranny of the officers of government, who dragged him from his starving family to work in some corvée of

public concern or of absurd magnificence, or to sell him the salt, respecting which he was neither permitted to choose the time at which he would purchase, nor the quantity he would take." *

Such a state of government, such a situation of the governed, was, no doubt, very inconsistent with justice, and called loudly for a change. Besides the badness of the government, other causes, some more remote and general, some more immediate and special, contributed to prepare and excite the French to shake off the yoke. Learning becoming daily more prevalent in Europe, and having been fostered in France by the ostentatious vanity of Lewis XIV. though limited, during his reign, to subjects of taste and sentiment, or to physics, yet soon extended to subjects of moral philosophy and politics; discussions by no means favourable to the theoretical approbation of such a government as that of France, however prudence might dictate a practical acquiescence. These speculations took a more abstract and metaphysical form than in countries where liberty was a *practical benefit*; probably, because at the time it was impossible to have their *practical effect* experimentally ascertained. As learning, in gene-

* New Annual Register for 1790, vol. i. page 120.

ral, increased, these disquisitions in that metaphysical mode became common in France, but hitherto only among scholars. Their connection with America afterwards disseminated principles of freedom among the people in general. The enormous expences incurred by her projects of aggrandizement, the profligacy of her court, and the profusion of her ministers, had thrown the finances of France into the greatest embarrassment. The inferiority of the revenue to the expenditure was such as to announce approaching bankruptcy, unless most speedy means were employed to bring the expence within the income. Calonne advised the calling of the Notables. The Notables found an assembly of the States necessary. Calonne was banished, Neckar was appointed Minister of Finance. Letters were issued for convoking the States-general. The spirit of liberty becoming more fervid from the heat of elections, the action and re-action of opinion, sentiment, and sympathy, the States assembled. It was proposed by government that they should meet in three different chambers, according to ancient usage. The people apprehended, that if they were in separate bodies, the clergy and nobility might controul the third estate ; and as they had resolved, not merely to make financial regulations, but to procure the redress of grievances, they conceived that the two privileged orders, from dependence on the court, and for

the preservation of their own immunities, would unite in over-ruling the popular voice. They therefore insisted that the States-general should consist of one body only, and regulations be established according to the majority of votes. The Court refused—the Third Estate persisted, and met as a National Assembly, inviting the nobles and clergy to join them as individual members. The King ordered them to separate: it was replied, “The Nation assembled has no ORDERS to receive.” Troops were summoned by the Court to Paris, and surrounded the capital. The people of Paris took the side of the national representatives; the army caught the prevailing feelings, the Bastile was destroyed, and the old government fell.

The notion, that a change from an oppressive and corrupt system must be good, was a natural, but not necessarily a wise conclusion. Emancipation from that despotism was or was not a proper subject of rejoicing to the lovers of mankind, according to the probability that the effect would be well regulated liberty, order, and happiness. Britons in general were delighted * with the overthrow of a fabric so

* Every reader must remember the joy that pervaded all ranks in this country on hearing that the Third Estate had carried its point, and even that the Bastile was destroyed. I remember, some weeks before that period, I happened to be at the little Theatre, when an actor, making some com-

contrary to that liberty which they themselves enjoyed. This was a natural and a benevolent pleasure ; but as it is profoundly remarked in the masterly investigation of Burke's "REGICIDE PEACE" in the Monthly Review of November 1796, "The great danger to a virtuous man arises from the excess of his virtuous propensities themselves. It is his duty to preserve, with the most religious care, a just balance among all the natural sentiments and moral principles of his character ; and to watch with the utmost vigilance the first appearance of any tendency to excess, in any single principle or passion. He must never forget the maxim of ancient wisdom, '*omnes virtutes mediocritate quadam esse moderatas.*' If he abandon himself to the guidance of any single principle, it matters not whether it be a zeal for the glory of God, or for the salvation of men ; for the quiet of society, or for the establishment of liberty ; for Popery or Calvinism ; for Monarchy or for Democracy ; it is sure equally to drown the voice of reason, to silence the feelings of nature, to dishonour his own character, and, (if he be armed with power) to vex and scourge the

mon:place observation, from the *Trip to Margate*, on the frivolity of the French, made the following addition, "*yet I do admire them for their present efforts in favour of liberty.*"— There was a loud clapping, and even huzzaing, from every corner of the house, for near half an hour.

human race." The love of liberty, a sentiment in itself so noble, and so congenial to the feelings of an Englishman, was so powerful as to conquer other sentiments. Admiration of the exertions which overthrew the despotism; absorbed horror for the outrages, and detestation for the violence and injustice, which soon marked the proceedings of its subverters ; and impeded the consideration of the tendency of the new order of things. While many approved of the French revolution as a triumph of liberty, without attending closely to any of ITS DISTINGUISHING FEATURES, some, from considering certain peculiar characteristics of it, which coincided with their own notions, prized it the more. Many, admiring the constitution of England, conceived that the French revolution would generate a government similar to that which the English had ascertained. Some, whose ideas of political establishments were formed from their own abstractions, much more than from experience, admired the French doctrines of the *Rights of Man*, which fell in with their own ideas on the principles and origin of CIVIL and POLITICAL LIBERTY. They admired the French for declaring the equality of mankind, and making that principle the basis of government, instead of modifying it according to circumstances and expediency. Others, considering less the SOURCES of political right than the MODES of intellectual

process, commended the legislators of France, for taking, as they said, *reason*, instead of *authority and example*, for their guide. "It was time," (one very able writer remarked, and another repeated) "that legislators, instead of that narrow and dastardly *coasting* which never ventures to lose sight of usage and precedent, should, guided by the *polarity* of reason, hazard a bolder navigation, and discover, in unexplored regions, the treasure of public felicity." These were the views of men of much more genius, speculative philosophy, and general learning, than conversancy with practical affairs. While men of vigorous and systematic understandings, habituated to speculations, approved of processes of mind conformable to their own, men, whose classical erudition had a greater influence in forming their opinions than experience and reason, and who judged of political equity and wisdom more from the practice of the ancient republics than from general history and investigation of mind, compared with the circumstances of the case, admired what they conceived to be approaches to the democratic spirit which they found arrayed in so beautiful colours by their favourite orators and poets. Statesmen of high rank, and the highest talents, venerating liberty in general; presuming French liberty would render its votaries happy; imputing the aggressions of France on this country and other na-

tions to the corrupt ambition of a court ; and anticipating tranquillity from her renovated state, rejoiced at a change that foreboded peace to Britain and to Europe.* The first avowed censurers of the French revolution were men whose talents and characters did not give much authority to their opinions, and they had not discovered strong arguments. The ablest men on the side of Administration abstained from delivering any opinion concerning the internal proceedings of a foreign state, that had not then interfered with our's. Ability was chiefly in support of the change among our neighbours, as far as opinions had been declared. While men of generous sentiments in Britain favoured the liberty of France; while men of genius approved of what they conceived consonant to their own political theories, or habits of reasoning; while sanguine statesmen prognosticated a new and happy order of things to the nations whose interests were the subjects of their thoughts, wisdom attempted to correct the errors and restrain the excesses of benevolent sentiments, to prevent the prevalence of partial theories, to make not metaphysics, but experience the guide to judgment; and to teach men, from the whole circumstances of the case, what judgment to form.

* See Fox's Speech on the Army Estimates, Feb. 1790.

Burke, as the friend of mankind, had reprobated the old despotism of France: although he thought it in the reign of Lewis the Sixteenth softened in its exercise by the progress of civilization, and the personal character of the monarch, still he deemed the welfare of the people to rest on an unstable basis, and to require very considerable reform before it could be a good government. But esteeming arbitrary power a great evil, he knew that unwise efforts to shake it off might produce greater calamities. Respecting the spirit of liberty, as, when well directed and regulated, a means of human happiness, his respect for it in every individual case was proportionate to its probable tendency to produce that end, where he had not actual experience to ascertain its effects. From principle and habit, *guided by* EXPERIENCE in his judgments and conduct, he considered liberty as a matter of moral enjoyment, and not of metaphysical disquisition. It was not merely the possession of it that constituted it a blessing, but the possession of it in such a degree, and with such regulations, as could make it subsidiary to virtue and happiness, without being able to produce vice and misery. Its operation as a blessing or a curse depended, he thought, partly on its intrinsic nature, partly on the character of its subjects, and partly on more extrinsic causes. He uniformly controverted those doctrines of the *Rights of Man*,

which would allow the same degree of liberty to all persons and in all circumstances. Like Livy; he did not think a horde of barbarians equally fitted for the contests of freedom, as men in a more advanced state of knowledge and civilization. Neither did he conceive that every one state, though refined, was equally fit for the beneficial exercise of liberty, as every other state not more refined. The controul, he thought, must be strong in the direct ratio of passion, as well as the inverse of knowledge and reason. "I DO NOT (he said) REJOICE TO HEAR THAT MEN MAY DO WHAT THEY PLEASE, UNLESS I KNOW WHAT IT PLEASES THEM TO DO." And in another place, "SOCIETY CANNOT EXIST UNLESS A CONTROULING POWER UPON WILL AND APPETITE BE PLACED SOMEWHERE; AND THE LESS OF IT THERE IS WITHIN, THE MORE THERE MUST BE WITHOUT. IT IS ORDAINED IN THE ETERNAL CONSTITUTION OF THINGS, THAT MEN OF INTEMPERATE MINDS CANNOT BE FREE. THEIR PASSIONS FORGE THEIR FETTERS.

In considering the French revolution, his expansive mind did not view *parts* only, but the *WHOLE*. Had his consideration of it been partial, his sensibility might have been gratified by the emancipation of millions : but a sagacity, as penetrating as his views were comprehensive, had discovered to him the nature of those principles which guided the revolutionists, as well as the characters on which they

were operating. The notions of liberty that were cherished by the French philosophy he knew to be speculative and visionary, and in no country to be reducible to salutary practice: that they proposed much less restraint than was necessary to govern any community of men, however small, such as men are known from experience to be: he knew also that the volatile, impetuous, and violent character of the French required, in so great a nation, much closer restraints than that of many other states. Infused into their liberty was another ingredient, which tended to make it much worse than it would have been in itself. From the same philosophy from which they had derived their extravagant notions of freedom, they also received infidelity. Burke had, many years before, predicted that their joint operation, unless steadily guarded against, would overturn civil and religious establishments, and destroy all social order. This was the opinion which he had maintained of infidelity and speculative politics in general, in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, and in his *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*; and of French infidelity and speculative politics in particular, in his speech after returning from France in 1773, and in all his speeches and writings, whenever the occasion required his admonition. With religion he foresaw that morals would fall; and that instead of the old arbitrary government, which he thought might

have been IMPROVED into a limited monarchy, at once combining religion, liberty, order, and virtue, a compound of impiety, anarchy, and wickedness would be substituted. The composition of the National Assembly, the degradation of the nobility, the abolition of the orders, the confiscation of the property of the church, and many other acts, tended to confirm the opinion which he had formed. Much as he detested the outrages, he execrated the principles more; foreseeing, that in their unavoidable operation they would lead to much greater enormities. In the principles and details of the new constitution he did not expect either happiness, or even permanent existence. Uniformly inimical to metaphysics, as the instrument of intellect in planning conduct, * he, CONSISTENTLY WITH HIMSELF, reprobated the speculative doctrine of the *Rights of Man*. Conceiving that the end of government, the good of the community, was, as appeared from experience, best attained when power was entrusted to talents, virtue, and property, † he disapproved of a system which permitted its

* See his Speeches on *American Taxation*, on *Conciliation with America*, on *allowing the Colonies to tax themselves by Representatives*; *Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol*, and in his works, *passim*.

† *Thoughts on the Discontents*; in his speeches and writings, *passim*.

exercise TO ALL MEN EQUALLY, *without any consideration of their fitness.* CONSISTENTLY WITH HIMSELF he reprobated such a disposal of power.

The vicinity of France to England made him apprehensive lest the speculations of that country should make their way into this, and produce attempts against a constitution founded upon observation and experience, not upon visionary theories. The approbation manifested by many in this country, both of the principles and proceedings of the French revolutionists, increased his apprehension, and he took the first proper opportunity of endeavouring to point out the danger of encouraging the Gallic notions. An occasion offered itself, at the discussion of the Army Estimates for the year 1790.

Adverting to the revolution in France, Fox considered that event as a reason for rendering a smaller military establishment necessary on our part. "The new form," he said, "that the government of France was likely to assume would, he was persuaded, make her a better neighbour, and less propense to hostility, than when she was subject to the cabal and intrigues of ambitious and interested statesmen." The opinion, that the new order in France was likely to produce more happiness to the inhabitants and more tranquillity to adjoining states, especially to this country, seems to have been one

of the principal causes that rendered this philanthropic and patriotic personage favourable to the French revolution. The anticipation of happiness to the French themselves seems to have arisen from the attention of his great mind being turned more to the general effects of liberty than to the contemplation of the particular characters of its new votaries; and to the principles and views of its most active supporters, as manifested in their declarations and conduct. The anticipation of tranquillity to other states, from the prevalence of freedom in France, even had there been nothing peculiar in the nature of that freedom and the habits and dispositions of its votaries, seems to have arisen more from theory than from the actual review of the history of free countries. Had the comprehensive and full mind of Fox called before him his own extensive knowledge of the actions of mankind, he would have immediately perceived that free nations have been as *propense to hostility* as the subjects of an arbitrary Prince; and, as he himself will readily admit, to much more effect, because with much more energy. The reasonings of the great orator seem to be, on this subject, derived from abstract principles much more than experience. This was, indeed, the case with Mr. Sheridan and other eminent men friendly to the French revolution.

Burke soon after delivered his sentiments on the subject : entertaining the very highest opi-

nion of the genius and wisdom of his friend, he expressed his anxiety lest the approbation of the French by a man to whose authority so much weight was due, should be misunderstood to hold up the transactions in *that country* as a fit object of *our* imitation. After expressing his thorough conviction that nothing could be farther from the intentions of so able and uniformly patriotic a champion of the British constitution, he entered upon the merits of his arguments, and of the question from which they had arisen. Fully coinciding with Fox respecting the evils of the old despotism, and the dangers that accrued from it to this country, and concerning the wisdom of our ancestors in preventing its contagion, as well as their vigour in resisting its ambitious projects, he thought very differently of the tranquillity to neighbours and happiness to themselves, likely to ensue from the late proceedings of France. "In the last age (he said) we had been in danger of being entangled, by the example of France, in the net of relentless despotism. Our present danger, from the model of a people whose character knew no medium, was that of being led, through an admiration of successful fraud and violence, to imitate the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy." The ardent sensibility of Burke's mind often transported him, as I have repeatedly remark-

ed, into very violent expressions. Impartial investigators, however, of his conduct will attend less to incidental warmth of language than to the series of opinion, relatively to its grounds; and of action, relatively to its causes and circumstances.

The more completely we examine Burke's intellectual operations and political exertions in detail, and the more full and accurate our induction of their principles is, the more clearly shall we see that his arguments and proceedings on the French revolution were on the same broad grounds as in the former parts of his life. I do not hesitate to say, that the very same process of understanding produced opposition to the ministerial plans respecting America and his reprobation of the French principle of legislation ; and I refer to his chief writings and speeches on both for the proof of my assertion. His reasoning during the American contest was this :—You have derived great benefit from the colonies under the constitution by which they have been heretofore managed : in attempting to establish a different constitution, you are neither sure of the practicability nor of the effect.

His reasoning on the principle of the French revolution was :—They have before them a balance of estates, a controul of powers, into which their own, after the Assembly of the States-general, might have been easily modelled, and from

which a great share of actual liberty and happiness has been derived. **BE GUIDED BY EXPERIENCE, AND NOT BY UNTRIED THEORIES.** He was apprehensive of the consequences of the French system to the constitution of England. As in his *Vindication of Natural Society*, he had shewn the probable effects of the false philosophy of Bolingbroke; and on his return from France, of that of Helvetius, Voltaire, and Rousseau, to social order; he had, in his Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, animadverted on the political speculations then disseminated in this country, and had reprobated the reasoning of men, who pursued the same object with himself, because they argued from ideal notions of the *Rights of Man*. He had perceived the notions spreading, not only among those who had talents and learning for such disquisitions, * but into clubs and societies, of which many of the members could not be competent judges of metaphysics, and might be led by wild and misunderstood theories to the most speculatively erroneous and practically hurtful opinions and sentiments concerning the constitution of this country. He argued from the same ratiocinative principle respecting this country, that he had done in the case of America, and was doing in the case of France:—**TRUST NOT UNTRIED SPECULA-**

* Dr. Price and Dr. Priestley.

TIONS: ADHERE TO THE LESSONS OF EXPERIENCE. This was the corner-stone of his political reasoning. HE, AT THAT VERY EARLY STAGE OF IT, WITH SAGACITY ALMOST PROPHETIC, DISCOVERED, in its operations, principles, and spirit, a tendency TO THOSE VERY EFFECTS NOW KNOWN TO EUROPE BY DIREFUL EXPERIENCE. "They laid the axe to the root of property. They made and recorded a sort of institute and digest of anarchy, called the *Rights of Man*. Their conduct was marked by a savage and unfeeling barbarity. They had no other system than a determination to destroy all order, subvert all arrangement, and reduce every rank and description of men to one level. Their signal of attack was the warwhoop; their liberty was licentiousness; and their religion was atheism." Burke concluded this first public discussion on the French revolution with a very high and just eulogium on the genius and dispositions of his friend Fox. It was in reply to this speech that Fox, after expressing his esteem and veneration for Burke, declared, "that if he were to put all the political information that he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, or that the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one scale; and the improvement he had derived from Mr. Burke's conversation and instruction into the other; the latter would preponderate." Still, however, he could not agree with the opinion of his friend respect-

ing the French revolution, at which he rejoiced, as an emancipation from despotism. He declared himself as much an enemy to democratical despotism, as to those of aristocracy or monarchy ; but he did not apprehend that the new constitution of France would degenerate into tyranny of any sort. “ He was (he said) a friend only to a mixed government like our own, in which, if the aristocracy, or indeed any of the three branches, were destroyed, the good effects of the whole, and the happiness derived under it, would, in his mind, be at an end.”

Sheridan expressed his disapprobation of the remarks and reasonings of Burke on this subject much more strongly than Fox had done. He thought them, he said, quite inconsistent with the general principles and conduct of so constant and powerful a friend of liberty ; and one who so highly valued the British government and revolution. Indignation and abhorrence of the revolution in France he thought not consonant with the admiration of that of England. Detesting the cruelties that had been committed, he imputed them to the natural resentment of a populace for long suffered and long felt oppression. He praised the National Assembly as the dispensers of good to their own country and other nations. “ The National Assembly (he said) had exerted a firmness and perseverance, hitherto unexam-

pled, that had secured the liberty of France, and vindicated the cause of mankind. What action of theirs authorised the appellation of a bloody, ferocious, and tyrannical democracy ?” Burke perceiving Sheridan’s view of affairs in France to be totally different from his, disapproving particularly of the opinion, that there was a resemblance between the principles of the revolutions in France and in England, and thinking his friend’s construction of his observations uncandid, declared, that Mr. Sheridan and he were from that moment separated for ever in politics. “ Mr. Sheridan (he said) has sacrificed my friendship in exchange for the applause of clubs and associations: I assure him he will find the acquisition too insignificant to be worth the price at which it is purchased.”

With a mind, from such a range of knowledge, and such powers of investigation and induction, so principled, as he possessed ; Burke had, from the beginning, betaken himself to consider the series of the French proceedings ; and to procure from every quarter such information as could enable him to understand the several parts, and comprehend the whole. The accurate Editor of his Posthumous Works informs us, that “ he desired all persons of his acquaintance, who were going to Paris (and curiosity attracted many) to bring him whatever they could collect, of the greatest circulation, both on the one side and

the other. He had also many correspondents, not only among the English and Americans residing there, but also among the natives, to whom, as well as to other foreigners, he had always done the honours of this country, as far as his means would permit him, with liberal hospitality. Among others, he received letters, endeavouring to trick out the events of the revolution in the most gaudy colouring, from Mr. Paine, Mr Christie, and Baron Cloots, afterwards better known by the name of Anacharsis. It was in answer to a letter of this kind, from a French gentleman, that he wrote his celebrated "Reflexions."

The sentiments and opinions declared in the House of Commons by Messrs. Fox and Sheridan induced Burke "to enlarge his *Reflexions* from the first sketch," and more closely to contemplate its probable influence on British minds. Dr. Price's Sermon, preached some months before, and then published, appeared to him to contain principles very different from those which had established and preserved our constitution; and to praise certain parts of the French proceedings on grounds which, if admitted in this country, he thought would tend to overturn the existing polity. He now, therefore, viewed the French system not only as likely to affect those immediately within the sphere of its operation, but as likely to be held up by its votaries and admirers as a model for

this country. "Farther additions (as his Editor tells us) were successively made, as the French proceedings and plans more completely unfolded their principles and spirit." The work was published in October, 1790.

A subject more momentous than that which now occupied this extraordinary mind cannot well be conceived,—whether a total political change in the situation of twenty-five millions of men was likely to produce happiness or misery to themselves, and to other nations? Such an inquiry was made by a man who grasped every important subject of his thoughts in all its relations, comprehended the detail of acts, the existing situations, the display of characters, the established measures of judgment and principles of action, intellectual processes and moral rules. These were the GRAND PREMISES from which he undertook to deduce his conclusion, that the French revolution was, and would be, an enormous evil to mankind. The ingenious and profound author of the *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, who seems to have made the operations of intellect a peculiar study, speaking of experience, observes that there is an experience of case, and an experience of principle. Both these combined to form the ground work of Burke's reasoning. He considered the particular proceedings of the French revolutionists: from comparing the variety of particulars, he endeavoured to ascertain their general character;

and also to investigate the causes both of the proceedings and the character. In this process of things, history or the experience of fact was the guide which he endeavoured to follow. He was completely master of pneumatology, perfectly acquainted with the constitution and operations of the understanding and affections; knew what directions of them were or were not favourable to the accomplishment of their best ends—the discovery of truth, the promotion of virtue, and the performance of duty. He investigated the principles of reasoning and of morality which guided the heads and hearts of the revolutionists. In this he rose to experience of law or the philosophy of mind. Solicitous about the happiness of France, but still more anxious about the happiness of Britain, he takes the new system into consideration, as it affects the one, and may affect both. In the principles of political reasoning, *in the canons of philosophy*, admitted by the revolutionists, there appeared to him a fundamental defect so important, that no superstructure, raised on such a basis, could stand. This was, in all public concerns, THE TOTAL REJECTION OF EXPERIENCE AS A GUIDE TO JUDGMENT AND TO CONDUCT. “In all regulations for the public good, they commit the whole to the mercy of untried speculations: they abandon the dearest interests of the public to loose theories: they despise experience, as the wisdom of unlettered men.” Thoroughly acquainted with

civil and political history, viewing cause and effect in the modes of reasoning, of conduct, and of government which he had contemplated, he conceived that, in expecting extravagant and absurd inferences, wild and noxious conduct, from THE REJECTION OF EXPERIENCE, he DREW A JUST CONCLUSION. Habituated himself to take experience for his guide in political disquisitions, he at least, in doing so, proceeded CONSISTENTLY. It was not only the adoption in general of untried speculation which he thought pernicious, but the individual speculation which they substituted for experience. "They have *the rights of man*. Against these there can be no proscription, against these no agreement is binding; these admit no temperament and no compromise; any thing withheld from their full demand is so much of fraud and injustice. The objections of these speculatists, if its forms do not quadrate with their theories, are as valid against an old and beneficent government as against the most violent tyranny and the greatest usurpation." This idea of the rights of man, Burke saw, arose partly from confusion of terms, and partly from erroneous speculation. If it was pretended that all men have an equal right to govern, the answer to this is, that government is a matter of convention, an agreement for the purpose of obtaining a specific end, the aggregate advantage of the parties. "Prior

to convention, (says the profound inquirer into "the Principles of Moral and Political Science"*) every one has a right to govern himself, but *not to govern any one else.* THE GOVERNMENT OF OTHERS, then, *prior to convention*, IS NOT MATTER OF RIGHT TO ANY ONE, although to have government, and this purged of every person incapable or unworthy of the trust, IS MATTER OF EXPEDIENCE to every one." The right is the creature of expediency, in every individual case; and in general classes, it is right that they should govern who are most fit for answering the end of government,—the promotion of the general good of the conventional society. All men are not equally fit for governing: it is, therefore, not equally right that all men should govern. Rejecting the rights of man, as in that abstract unqualified form, and applicable to every possible case, the foundation of just government; he delivers his sentiments on the real rights of men, as ascertained by the principles and circumstances of civil society. I shall quote this part of the work at considerable length, as it collects into one whole his opinions, reasonings, and principles, concerning the foundation, rights, and duties of legitimate government.

"Far am I from denying in theory; full as

* Vol. ii. p. 471, on the exercise of legislative power.

far is my heart from withholding in practice, (if I were of power to give or to withhold) the *real* rights of men. In denying their false claims of right, I do not mean to injure those which are real, and such as their pretended rights would totally destroy. If civil society be made for the advantage of man, all the advantages for which it is made become his right ; it is an institution of beneficence, and law itself is only beneficence acting by rule. Men have a right to live by that rule ; they have a right to justice as between their fellows ; whether their fellows are in politic function or in ordinary occupation. They have a right to the fruits of their industry, and to the means of making their industry fruitful. They have a right to the acquisitions of their parents, to the nourishment and improvement of their offspring ; to instruction in life and consolation in death. Whatever each man can separately do without trespassing upon others, he has a right to do for himself ; and he has a right to a fair portion of all which society ; with all its combinations of skill and force, can do in his favour. In this partnership all men have equal rights, but not to equal things. He that has but five shillings in the partnership has as good a right to it as he that has five hundred has to his larger proportion ; but he has not a right to an equal dividend in the product of the joint estate ; and as to the

share of power, authority, and direction which each individual ought to have in the management of the state, that I must deny to be amongst the direct original rights of man in civil society ; for I have in my contemplation the civil social man, and no other. It is a thing to be settled by convention.

“ If civil society be the offspring of convention, that convention must be its law. That convention must limit and modify all the descriptions of constitution which are formed under it. Every sort of legislative, judicial, or executory power, are its creatures. They can have no being in any other state of things ; and how can any man claim, under the conventions of civil society, rights which do not so much as suppose its existence ?

“ Government is not made in virtue of natural rights, which may and do exist in total independence of it ; and exist in much greater clearness, and in a much greater degree of abstract perfection : but their abstract perfection is their practical defect. By having a right to every thing, they want every thing. Government is a contrivance of human wisdom to provide for human wants. Men have a right that these wants should be provided for by this wisdom. Among these wants is to be reckoned the want, out of civil society, of a sufficient restraint upon their passions. Society requires not only that the passions of individuals should be subjected, but

that, even in the mass and body as well as in the individuals, the inclinations of men should frequently be thwarted, their will controlled, and their passions brought into subjection. This can only be done *by a power out of themselves*; and not, in the exercise of its function, subject to that will and to those passions which it is its office to bridle and to subdue. In this sense the restraints on men, as well as their liberties, are to be reckoned among their rights. But as the liberties and the restrictions vary with times and circumstances, and admit of infinite modifications, they cannot be settled upon any abstract rule; and nothing is so foolish as to discuss them upon that principle."

In this passage, containing what may be called the POLITICAL CREED OF EDMUND BURKE, we might refer to those who have most minutely studied and completely comprehended his antecedent works, whether there is in it any sentiment or expression INCONSISTENT with his former opinions. To the contemplators of the British constitution it may be referred, to determine whether there be any thing in Burke's articles of political faith contrary to its principles and regulations. To those conversant in the consideration of the principles of government in general we may apply, to point out *what there is in these notions* CONTRARY TO A

WELL REGULATED LIBERTY ; to a polity adapted to the promotion of the general good. Assertions, that his publication in general, or any series of arguments in it, were inimical either to the civil rights of man, or to the British constitution, are mere empty sounds until established by proof.

Guided by the same experience, which rested government upon expediency instead of abstract rights, he inquires into those principles which tend most powerfully to promote its object ; the security and happiness of the community. To controul the workings of passion, he, from his acquaintance with the mind of man, and with the actions of men in domestic, social, civil, and political relations, had formed a conclusion that there was not so powerful a check as religion. Religion, he knew, had, in all ages and countries, in proportion to its being well understood and followed, tended to soften barbarism, restrain wickedness, meliorate the affections, and promote happiness. A principle of so beneficial operation, he considered it to be the indispensable duty of lawgivers to encourage ; and from the experienced proportion of happiness to the proportion in which it existed in individuals or societies, he inferred, that wherever that principle was wanting the consequence would be misery. From the sources of the French revolution, into which

great draughts of infidelity had been studiously infused, he had anticipated the prevalence of irreligion. From contemplating the actual conduct of the revolutionists, he found that what he had expected had come to pass,—that impiety prevailed, almost to atheism. From their want of religion he augured ill of their future virtue and happiness. I do not say that Burke reasoned rightly in this case; but that this was the process of his reasoning. If any one will prove, from history and the constitution of human nature, that either individuals or nations may do as well without religion as with it, then it must be conceded that Burke was wrong in his general principle. If it can be proved, in contradiction to what Burke and many others have asserted concerning their irreligion, that the French revolutionists were very religious men, then must it be allowed that he was wrong as to fact.

Considering religion as the most weighty counterpoise to violent or vicious passion, he infers, that it is most necessary in those governments in which passion is most likely to prevail. In Eastern despotisms, where the vicious passions of a few individuals, for want of political restraint, would be apt to reign without controul, the salutary effects of religious restraint are manifest. Under governments in which the people have a large share of the power, he thought that there must be a great aggregate

of violent passion, and therefore a proportionable quantity of religion even politically necessary. Convinced of the utility and indeed the necessity of religion to the well-being of a state, he considered such means as were subsidiary to it as proper to be inculcated. These, reasoning in his usual way of practical wisdom, he concluded to be indefinable in any abstract proposition, and that they must be accommodated to particular circumstances, degrees of knowledge, and habits of thinking. Religion, he considered as cherished by national establishments, which should be on the whole judiciously constituted, even though liable to some objections. The effects of religion, supported by an ecclesiastical establishment accommodated to different conditions and circumstances of men, he illustrates from the state of England, as an example which the French, by the correction of their own orders, might have followed; and a warning to the English by what to abide: and perhaps in no writings is there to be found a more philosophical and profound view, though, like all useful philosophy, simple and intelligible, of the effects of different gradations of spiritual teachers to different ranks in society. “The people of England (he said) know how little influence the teachers of religion are likely to have with the wealthy and powerful of long standing; and how much less with the newly fortunate, if they appear in a

manner no way assorted to those with whom they must associate, and over whom they must even exercise, in some cases, something like an authority. What must they think of that body of teachers, if they see it in no part above the establishment of their domestic servants? If the poverty were voluntary, there might be some difference. Strong instances of self-denial operate powerfully on our minds; and a man who has no wants has obtained great freedom and firmness, and even dignity. But as the mass of any description of men are but men, and their poverty cannot be voluntary, that disrespect which attends upon all lay poverty, will not depart from the ecclesiastical. Our provident constitution has therefore taken care that those who are to instruct presumptuous ignorance, those who are to be censors over insolent vice, should neither incur their contempt, nor live upon their alms; nor will it tempt the rich to a neglect of the true medicine of their minds." This was the reasoning of expanded and practical wisdom, considering not what might be necessary for men, if they thought and acted always according to reason, (such men experienced wisdom does not know) but for men with the infirmities, imperfections, and erroneous criteria of judgment, which are generally found in life. He does not assert that religion is abstractly and intrinsically better for being impressed by persons of a

certain external appearance and situation, but that it is more impressive on certain ranks on account of these adventitious circumstances ; and that therefore the gradation is useful. Religion, he concludes, has been and is a most beneficial sentiment, even when mixed with some ingredients not in the abstract consonant to reason. Sentiments and principles of every sort partake of the cast and character of the mind in which they exist. "Superstition (he says) is the religion of feeble minds." He therefore would regulate it, rather than proscribe it; and disapproves of the violent proceedings of the French against men, merely because they were superstitious. To a disregard for religion he imputes the confiscation of the church lands ; because, if it had been from the necessity of the state, there could be no reason for a general seizure of the property of any class of individuals ; the want ought to be supplied by an equal contribution from all. Taking the reports of the popular Minister as his documents, he does not admit that the necessity did exist. A partial proscription, either where there was no want, or a want affecting the members of the state generally, he imputed to a dislike of the proscribed class. Besides its actual injustice, he saw that the degradation of the clergy consequent on this seizure of their property would, in the natural course of sentiments, lessen the influence of their instructions,

by making them considered as mere hirelings of the state. This reduction of the clergy, combining with the known sentiments of the philosophers, whose writings had been so instrumental to the revolution, he deduced from a design to abolish the Christian religion. "It seems to me (he said) that this new ecclesiastical establishment is intended only to be temporary, and preparatory to the utter abolition, under any of its forms, of the Christian religion, whenever the minds of men are prepared for this last stroke against it, by the accomplishment of the plan for bringing its ministers into universal contempt." The confiscation of church property is imputed by Burke to a design formed by the French men of letters to abolish the Christian religion. "The literary cabal," he says, "had, some years ago, formed something like a regular plan for the destruction of the Christian religion. This object they pursued with a degree of zeal which hitherto had been discovered only in the propagators of some system of piety. What was not to be done towards their great end, by any direct or immediate act, might be wrought by a longer process, through the medium of opinion. To command that opinion, the first step is to establish a dominion over those who direct it. They contrived to possess themselves, with great method and perseverance, of all the avenues to literary fame. Many of them indeed stood high in the

ranks of literature and science. These atheistical fathers have a bigotry of their own ; and they have learnt to talk against monks with the spirit of a monk. But in some things they are men of the world. The resources of intrigue are called in to supply the defects of argument and wit. To their system of literary monopoly was joined an unremitting industry to blacken and discredit, in every way and by every means, all those who did not hold to their faction. To those who have observed the spirit of their conduct, it has long been clear that nothing was wanted but the power of carrying the intolerance of the tongue and of the pen into a prosecution which would strike at property, liberty, and life." Whether Voltaire, and other philosophers and literary men of France, intended to overturn the Christian religion, their writings and conduct had evidently that tendency ; and where there is, in the conduct of men of talents or even men of common understanding, a direct and constant tendency to any object, intention may be very fairly inferred. After investigating the intellectual and moral principles by which the French were directed, estimating, from history and the constitution of the human mind, their tendency, and shewing their effects in the proscription of property without any evidence of delinquency, he proceeds to the policy of the new French government in its provisions for strength and security.

He considers the organization of the new legislative, executive, judicial, military, and financial establishments adopted by the National Assembly, and finding the same predilection for untried theory in their principle, the same inconsistency and inefficiency in their details, infers that they will neither be permanent, nor answer their purpose while they last.

Thus did Burke, reasoning from EXPERIENCE, an experience comprising the particular state and proceedings of France, the history of mankind, and the constitution, moral and intellectual, of the human mind, conclude that a revolution, in its acts and principles so contrary to the lessons of that great beneficial TEACHER, would produce, as it was then producing, disorder, injustice, and misery. When it shall be proved that his deductions from particular fact, general history, and the philosophy of mind, are not justified by the premises, then it must be conceded that his REFLEXIONS on the Revolution of France were ill founded. When it shall be established that mankind or individual men, disregarding religion and property, in their moral estimates, and experience, in their intellectual conclusions, have attained order, virtue, and happiness, then may it be proved that Burke's reasoning was false and sophistical. But until that theory be confirmed by a legitimate induction, the REFLEXIONS OF BURKE, GROUNDED ON EXPERIENCE, MUST BE ADMITTED TO BE JUST.

From the event, indeed, we might almost ascribe to him the GIFT OF PROPHECY. He has certainly displayed that degree of divination which arises from a thorough knowledge of the nature and relations of man, and that can from causes anticipate effects. If we examine what Burke said would be the consequence, and compare it with what is the actual state of affairs, we may at least confidently assert that he has not been mistaken : we may even affirm that his predictions have not exaggerated the irreligion, anarchy, tyranny, and injustice which they anticipated. Such a system as Burke conceives to exist, and likely to exist, in France, producing and and likely to produce fatal effects, he naturally reprobated as a model for the imitation of England. He thought it incumbent on him to dwell on this subject, as a disposition had been manifested to assimilate the French revolution of 1789 to the English of 1688. Dr. Price had, at the anniversary of our revolution, advanced, on the great event commemorated, concerning the tenure of the Crown, and other subjects of British polity, principles which Burke thought dangerous, especially when combined with not merely an approval of the French revolution, but an exulting joy at the degradation of the Monarch and privileged orders, and an address of congratulation sent to the National Assembly, on the overthrow of their monarchical government.

Burke maintains, that one of the principal sources of the happiness which the British nation enjoys under its present constitution, is its habitual and general adherence to the dictates of experience ;—the practical avoidance of great innovations. In his illustration of this just and salutary doctrine, he, it must be owned, goes somewhat farther in the instance of the rights asserted at the revolution than history altogether justifies, or indeed the great objects of his work required. The arguments which he adduced, fully established that the French revolution did not tend to the good of its votaries, even when compared with their own old despotism ; much more, that it was not a model for Britain to follow. It was, therefore, unnecessary to inquire what was the RIGHT of Britain ; *in any supposeable case*, when it was obvious—what was EXPEDIENT in the existing state of things. This subject leads him to the question of resistance, in which he shows himself a moderate, wise Whig ! “ The revolution of 1688,” he says, “ was obtained by a just war ; the only case in which any war, and much more a civil war, can be just,—necessity. The question (of resistance) is (like all other questions of state) a question of dispositions, and of means and probable consequences, rather than of positive rights. As it was not made for common abuses, so it is not to be agitated by common minds. The superlative line of de-

marcation, where obedience ought to end, and resistance must begin, is faint, obscure, and not easily defineable. It is not a single act, or a single event, which determines it. Government must be abused and deranged indeed, before it can be thought of, and the prospect of the future must be as bad as the experience of the past. When things are in that lamentable condition, the nature of the disease is to indicate the remedy to those whom nature has qualified to administer, in extremities, this critical, ambiguous, bitter potion to a distempered state. Times, and occasions, and provocations, will teach their own lessons. The wise will determine from the gravity of the case; the irritable from sensibility to oppressive, the high-minded, from disdain and indignation at abusive, power in unworthy hands; the brave and bold, from the love of honourable danger in a generous cause: but with or without right, a revolution will be the very last resource of the thinking and the good."

I have hitherto, in considering the REELEXIONS, attended only to its ratiocinative scope, and have endeavoured to estimate its character as an eviſion of truth, an exertion of reasoning, and an operation of wisdom. As a display of genius it equals any production of the age, even any of Burke's own. "Arguments (to use the words of by far the ablest of his literary opponents) every where dexterous and specious,

sometimes grave and profound, cloathed in the most rich and various imagery, and aided by the most pathetic and picturesque description, speak the opulence and the powers of that mind, of which age has neither dimmed the discernment nor enfeebled the fancy, neither repressed the ardour, nor narrowed the range.” “His subject is as extensive as political science—his allusions and excursions reach almost every region of human knowledge.” A most perspicacious critic gives the following striking account and just description of the ornamental portion of the publication.* “In his ornament he is rich to profusion. His metaphors are drawn from every object in the creation, divine and human, natural and artificial, ancient and modern, recondite and familiar, sublime and grovelling, gross and refined. He ranges from the angels of heaven, to the furies of hell ; from the aeronaut, soaring above the clouds in his balloon, to the mole, nuzzling and burying himself in his mother earth ; from the living grasshopper of the field, and from the cuckow of the air, to the stuffed birds and the dead mummy of the Museum ; from the wild orgies of Thrace, to the savage processions of Onondaga ; from the organic molecule

* Monthly Review for November, 1793, p. 314, on Burke's Reflexions.

of the metaphysician, to the scales, weights, and ledger of the shopkeeper; from the kettle of the magician, and the dark science of the hermetic adept, to the porridge pot of the scullion, and the pickling and preserving knowledge of the experienced cook; from the decent drapery, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, to the huge full-bottomed periwig of a bedizened monarch; from the purity and delicacy of a Roman matron, to the filth and nastiness of a village pig-stye; from the sweet fragrance emitted by the bloom of a young, lovely, and beautiful female, in the morning of her days *decorating the horizon of life*, to the foul stench exhaling from the mental blotches and running sores of an old, rotten, ulcerated, aristocrat." To antecedent and consequent, wit, humour, beauty, sublimity, and pathos, lend an aid not wanted for eviction of truth, but adding delight, admiration, and astonishment to instruction and wisdom. To collect instances of these excellencies is easy, the difficulty in such abundance would be the selection:—

“Copia judicium, sæpe morata meum est.”

Perhaps there will not be found a happier instance of contemptuous exhibition than in the following passage, in which he warns his correspondent not to judge, from certain republican publications, of the opinions and sentiments generally prevalent in England. “The

vanity, restlessness, petulance, and spirit of intrigue of several petty cabals, who attempt to hide their total want of consequence in bustle and noise, and puffing, and mutual quotation of each other, makes you imagine that our contemptuous neglect of their abilities is a mark of general acquiescence in their opinions. No such thing, I assure you. Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud, and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who *make the noise* are the ONLY INHABITANTS of the field; that of course, they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome insects of the hour." *

The description of the exulting joy displayed by an eminent Dissenter on the humiliation of the King of France, and the fall of the monarchy (a joy reasonable, if a rationally free and happy constitution appeared likely to result from the overthrow of despotism, but premature and groundless as the case actually stood) shews a force of comic humour, a brilliancy of witty allusion, a poignancy of satirical insinuation, seldom exceeded, or, indeed, equalled

* Reflexions, p. 126-7.

by any writer whose comic powers have been the exclusive sources of his fame.

“ This inspires a juvenile warmth through his whole frame. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances; and when he arrives at his peroration, it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the pispah of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into the following rapture:—

‘ What an eventful period is this! I am *thankful* that I have lived to it; I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* I have lived to see a *diffusion* of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see *the rights of men* better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see *thirty millions of people*, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice. *Their King led in triumph, and an arbitrary Monarch surrendering himself to his subjects.*’

“ Before I proceed further, I have to remark, that Dr Price seems rather to over-value the great acquisitions of light which he has obtained and diffused in this age. The last century appears to me to have been quite as much enlightened. It had, though in a different place, a triumph as memorable as that of Dr. Price,

and some of the great preachers of that period partook of it as eagerly as he has done in the triumph of France. On the trial of the Rev. Hugh Peters for high treason, it was deposed, that when King Charles was brought to London for his trial, the apostle of liberty in that day conducted the *triumph*. ‘I saw,’ says the witness, ‘his Majesty in the coach with six horses, and Peters riding before the King *triumphing*.’ Dr. Price, when he talks as if he had made a discovery, only follows a precedent; for, after the commencement of the King’s trial, this precursor, the same Dr. Peters, concluding a long prayer at the royal chapel at Whitehall, (he had very triumphantly chosen his place) said, ‘I have prayed and preached these twenty years; and now I may say with old Simeon, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.*’ * “Peters had not the fruits of his prayer; for he neither departed so soon as he wished, nor in peace. He became (what I heartily hope none of his followers may be in this country) himself a sacrifice to the triumph which he led as Pontiff.”

Often as it has been quoted, I cannot refrain from repeating the citation of that passage in which a most charming woman is described by the pen of taste and sensibility; a sensibility

* State trials, vol. ii. p. 360, 363.

raised to the highest pitch by the misfortunes of its object.

“ It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles ; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh ! what a revolution ! and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall ! Little did I dream that, when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom ; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult.—But the age of chivalry is gone.”

The same all-grasping genius exhibits most striking examples of the pathetic, the terrible, the sublime. The following few lines appear to be the dictates of a prophetic spirit, at least of that prophetic spirit which marks his reasoning in general on the French revolution, as it

did on the American war ; the prescience which arises from wisdom contemplating objects in all their circumstances and relations, and from cause inferring effect. Speaking of the French republic :—" In the present (form) it can hardly remain ; but before its final settlement, it may be obliged to pass, as one of our poets says, through great varieties of untried being, and in all its transmigrations, to be purified by fire and blood." One who had not read Burke would think that such a description had proceeded from the actual survey of the violent and multiplied vicissitudes and revolutions of the French government, and its pernicious and bloody consequences to the civilized world, and not from anticipation.

Impartiality obliges me to acknowledge that in some subordinate parts of the REFLEXIONS, Burke's imagination and feelings have carried him beyond the bounds of cool reflecting reason. His account of the virtues of the French noblesse appears exaggerated, at least as far as can be judged from the samples of them that we have had occasion to see in this country. The same observation will, on the whole, apply also to their clergy, concerning whom the experience of this country can hardly justify an opinion, that they were very learned or able men *as a body*, although as such they are decent and inoffensive, and so far respectable. The exaggeration, however, of the imputed merit does

not affect the justness of the argument. Men ought not to have been degraded merely because, as a class, they were neither distinguished for eminent wisdom or virtue, if, with a mediocrity of abilities and good dispositions, they could by certain regulations be made useful in their former rank, of which experience might shew the probability. There have been, and are, in free and well constituted governments, classes not distinguished by qualities of the head or heart, beyond classes somewhat lower, the aggregate of whose power, exertions, and influence, has a beneficial effect on the community at large. With regard to the clergy, their use as a body must be, and was great, even with their ordinary attainments. Policy, therefore, required that they should be preserved in that situation of respect in which their use could have been the greatest; and justice required that there should be no confiscation where there was no delinquency. It was not necessary to magnify the characters of the French noblesse and clergy as a warning to England. Educated in a free country, with every spur to the exercise of unprejudiced reason, our nobility were much superior as a body to those of France, (however contemptible some individuals may be) as from various causes, national and professional, are the clergy of Britain as a body to those under the old government of France.

But though there may be too high colouring in some portions of this extraordinary performance, where is there to be met a work which so completely unfolded the principles of thought and action that guided and prompted the French revolutionists, which so accurately, minutely, and fully predicted the consequences of such theory and practice, as BURKE'S REFLEXIONS ON THE REVOLUTION OF FRANCE?

When this production made its appearance, it was by all celebrated as the effort of uncommon genius, although very different notions were entertained concerning its reasoning. By those who were enamoured of the French liberty, without considering *its peculiar nature, adjuncts, and effects*, the book was abused as a defence of arbitrary institutions. By those who are averse to untried theories, and resolve to adhere to establishments on the whole good, it was praised as the ablest vindication of the constitution, which experience, a surer guide than hypothesis, taught them to revere, and prompted them to love. The first public tribute of gratitude and praise bestowed upon it came from a very respectable and important part of our national establishment,—THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD. Many members of that learned body considering Burke's performance as not only an admirable work of genius, but as a treasure of valuable principles, the most momentous to the friends of English liberty, loyalty, virtue, and religion, proposed

that the university should confer the degree of LL.D. on its illustrious author. The following account of the proceedings on that subject are extracted from the Gentleman's Magazine for February 1791 :

“ Mr. Urban, I have always thought it a valuable circumstance in your Magazine, that it has been from its commencement a register of the current literature of the times. From such original documents of the progress or variation in the public opinion respecting religion, taste, and politics, are collected the most interesting materials of literary history. I conceived, therefore, that whatever tends to mark the public opinion of a work so valuable, on so many accounts, as Mr. Burke's “ Reflexions,” would be acceptable to you. I have sent you the Oxford address to Mr. Burke, on the publication of his “ Reflexions,” together with Mr. Burke's answer. You are probably aware, that the Masters who signed the address, proposed to the heads of houses, that a diploma degree of LL.D. might be conferred on Burke ; and that the proposal was rejected, from an apprehension, as it has been said, that the degree would not have met with the *unanimous* votes of the members of convocation. However that might be, the degree was certainly not opposed by the heads of houses, from any disaffection to the cause which Mr. Burke had so nobly and patriotically defended. It was rejected by seven

heads against six. For much the greater part of the rest of the university the following address will speak.

ADDRESS FROM THE RESIDENT GRADUATES IN THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD.

“ TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE EDMUND BURKE,

“ We whose names are subscribed, resident graduates in the university of Oxford, request you to accept this respectful declaration of our sentiments, as a tribute which we are desirous of paying to splendid talents employed in the advancement of public good. We think it fit and becoming the friends of our church and state, to avow openly their obligations to those who distinguish themselves in the support of our approved establishments; and we judge it to be our especial duty to do this in seasons peculiarly marked by a spirit of rash and dangerous innovation. As members of an university, whose institutions embrace every useful and ornamental part of learning, we should esteem ourselves justified in making this address, if we had only to offer you our thanks for the valuable accession which the stock of our national literature has received by the publication of your important “ Reflexions.” But we have higher objects of consideration, and nobler motives to gratitude: we are persuaded, that we consult the real and permanent

interests of this place, when we acknowledge the eminent service rendered, both to our civil and religious constitution, by your able and disinterested vindication of their true principles ; and we obey the yet more sacred obligation to promote the cause of religion and morality, when we give this proof, that we honour the advocate by whom they are so eloquently and effectually defended."

This address was conveyed to Mr. Burke by Mr. Windham, of Norfolk ; through whom Mr. Burke returned his answer :

MR. BURKE'S LETTER TO MR. WINDHAM.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" The valuable present I received from the resident graduates in the university of Oxford, becomes doubly acceptable by passing through your hands. Gentlemen so eminent for science, erudition, and virtue, and who possess the uncommon art of doing kind things in the kindest manner, would naturally choose a person qualified like themselves to convey their favours and distinctions to those whom they are inclined to honour. Be pleased to assure those learned gentlemen, that I am beyond measure happy in finding my well meant endeavours well received by them ; and I think my satisfaction does not arise from motives merely selfish, because their declared approbation must be of the greatest importance in giving an effect (which without

that sanction might well be wanting) to a humble attempt in favour of the cause of freedom, virtue, and order, united. This cause it is our common wish and our common interest to maintain ; and it can hardly be maintained without securing on a solid foundation, and preserving in an uncorrupted purity, the noble establishments which the wisdom of our ancestors has formed, for giving permanency to those blessings which they have left to us as our best inheritance. We have all a concern in maintaining them all : but if all those, who are more particularly engaged in some of those establishments, and who have a peculiar trust in maintaining them, were wholly to decline all marks of their concurrence in opinion, it might give occasion to malicious people to suggest doubts, whether the representation I had given was really expressive of the sentiments of the people on those subjects. I am obliged to those gentlemen for having removed the ground of those doubts.

I have the honour to be, &c.

EDMUND BURKE."

Of those who, from talents and knowledge, were competent judges of literary and political discussions, the Ministry and their friends, the greater number of the nobility and landed gentry, a considerable portion of monied men, some of the leaders of Opposition, most of the members of the universities, most of the clergy,

most gentlemen of the navy and army, a few of the professed men of letters, rather the smaller part of two of the learned professions, admirers of the constitution, for its experienced blessings, conceived the highest opinion of the reasoning and wisdom of Burke's book. Of those who were NOT *competent judges*, great numbers praised it upon *trust*:—common courtiers, household troops, underlings of office, and many other servants or retainers of Government whose employment and situation did not require ability and learning, admirers of royalty merely for its trappings and appendages; the greater number of persons of fashion, their dependants, and imitators; in short, such as were the mere parrots of the informed and wise.

On the other hand,—of men of talents and knowledge, who, though they admired the execution, condemned the tendency of the REFLEXIONS, there were those of high speculative notions of liberty; the majority of Burke's former associates, the very ablest of them in the House of Commons, and some of the ablest in the House of Peers; the greater number of professed men of letters, who, from their habits of metaphysical disquisitions, often followed theory more than experience; men of the partial erudition which Grecian and Roman literature bestows, who formed their opinions more from particular models than general principles and history; many of the legal and medical,

professions, a few of the clergy, a few of the nobility and gentry, a greater portion of the monied interest than of the landed, dissenting preachers, philosophical deists. Of those who were NOT *competent judges*, great numbers condemned Burke's REFLEXIONS upon trust:—retainers of Opposition, understrappers of letters, implicit believers of infidelity, inferior tradesmen and mechanics, debating-society orators, revolution club-men, declaimers at public meetings,—in short, also, mere parrots of learning and ingenuity.

The first answer to Burke came from the able pen of Dr. Priestley. A considerable part of this publication was a vindication of Dr. Price's opinion concerning the source and tenure of monarchical power in England: the rest is on the happy effects to be expected from the glorious principles of the French revolution, from which Priestley forbodes the enlargement of liberty, the melioration of society, the increase of virtue and of happiness. As Priestley neither shewed, from history nor from the constitution of the human mind, that these principles, in their usual operation and consequence, tended to produce all those blessings, it is the less surprising that the event was so totally contrary to his predictions.

But the answer to Burke, which produced the most important effects in these kingdoms, was the "RIGHTS OF MAN," by the noted *Thomas*

Paine. Perhaps there never was a writer who more completely attained the art of *impressing* vulgar and undistinguishing minds. The plain perspicuity of his language, the force of his expressions, the directness of his efforts, wore so much the appearance of clear and strong reasoning (to those that judge from manner more than matter) that numbers, borne down by his bold assertions, supposed themselves convinced by his arguments.

The substance of his doctrine was peculiarly pleasing to the lower ranks. When mechanics and peasants were told that they were as fit for governing the country as any man in parliament, the notion flattered their vanity, pride, and ambition. While he had for the ignorant these notions of equality, * “so agreeable to the populace,” he had additional charms, in metaphysical distinctions and definitions, to delight the half-learned with the idea, that when they were repeating his words, they were pouring forth philosophy. For them he had imprescriptible rights, organization, general will, attaint upon principle, and many other phrases, from which his votaries thought themselves as much instructed as the under *Grave digger* in *Hamlet* supposed himself from the learned distinctions

* See an instance of the same kind in Hume's History of the Reign of Richard II. speaking of John Ball.

of the upper. This mode of procedure it would be very unjust to impute to the want of powers of evincing truth, wherever truth was his object. He had, certainly, in his "Crisis" and "Common Sense" displayed most penetrating acuteness and great force of argument. It was not from weakness that he reasoned upon assumptions, nor from confusion of ideas that he made unintelligible definitions: it was from dexterous art, and a versatility of genius, accommodating itself to diversity of objects and persons, but adapting itself peculiarly to those classes who would believe themselves convinced when they were only persuaded. It would be foreign to the purpose of this work to enter into the detail of Paine's "*Rights of Man*."

The amount of his theory is this: That no government is just, which is not actually, and has not been historically and originally, founded on what he calls the *Rights of Man*. He applies this general principle to existing governments, and finding that none of them are reconcileable to his notions of natural equality and the *rights of man*, except that of America and the new constitution of France, he proposes that all others shall be pulled down; but first, and especially, what we call the Constitution, and he the usurpation, of England. England exhibits a polity by no means conformable to the ideas of Thomas Paine. France he considers as approaching nearer to consummate perfec-

tion than America. One of the chief evils, contrary to this natural equality and *rights of man*, was the existence of artificial distinctions ; such as rank, title, and corporate bodies. To level all distinction and rank, was one indispensable ingredient in every system established on these grounds. The inequalities subsisted to a great degree in Britain, as appeared from the King, the House of Peers, the House of Commons, the universities, and the accumulation of estates through the absurd rule of hereditary succession. He inveighs against a mixed government, as an unjust controul on the operation of the general will, and contrary to the rights of man. In France, great advances had been made in the levelling system, and greater were likely to be made : therefore England was a very bad government, and France a very good one, and likely to be still better. The English government, consequently, ought to be pulled down, and to be rebuilt upon the French model. Another reason for pulling down the English system was, that between seven and eight hundred years ago it had been conquered. This defect in its origin was an argument paramount to expediency from its present state. Mr. Thomas Paine has not proved from history, that governments, founded on these levelling principles, have been conducive to the purposes of good establishments—the happiness of society : he has not proved, from the constitution of the

human mind and experience of human nature, that men act better without CONTRoul than with it; and that there is an equality of capacity for government in all men; an equality necessary to render their government expedient. His theory is founded on an assumption, and is not supported by proof. It is not only not conformable, but is contrary, to experience; therefore it carries in it the grounds of disproof. Though inadmissible as a chain of reasoning, it certainly displays very great and variegated ability. There is a strong sarcastic humour in it, which, to many readers, supplied the deficiency of the reasoning: jokes passed for arguments, ludicrous stories for lucid illustration; lively invective was received for energetic eloquence, bold assertion for unanswerable demonstration.

The societies and clubs, fast increasing in number and divisions, testified the highest approbation of Paine's "*Rights of Man*;" and very industriously, through their affiliations, spread cheap editions of it among the common people, in all parts of the kingdom; but especially in populous cities, towns, and villages. When we consider that *Paine reprobates the polity of this country, and advises the people to unite and subvert it*, and that the *Revolution and Constitutional Societies* in London, with affiliated clubs in other parts, *praised and* DISSEMINATED *these doctrines* among those who were most likely to swallow

them, we can be at no great loss to comprehend the intention of the propagandists. Wherever tendency is obvious in the habitual conduct of men having the use of their reason, design may be fairly inferred.

Meanwhile, Burke, having received an answer from the gentleman to whom he had written his letter, replied in a second, entitled "A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly."

After retouching several subjects that he had brought forward in his REFLEXIONS, he proceeded to examine the French system in its institutions and principles, with their effects on morals and manners. In his former treatise he had chiefly considered public and political consequences; in the present, he carries his view to private, social, and domestic happiness; and proves that their plans of education and civil regulations sprung from the same source of untried theory, and tended to the same disorder and misery. On the subject of juvenile tuition, he shews the extent of his knowledge, and the profoundness of his wisdom. He reprobates the principles by the French system inculcated on youthful minds the precepts taught, and the models exhibited. "Their great problem is to find a substitute for all the principles which hitherto have been employed to regulate the human will and action. They find dispositions in the mind, of such force and quality, as may

fit men, far better than the old morality, for the purposes of such a state as theirs, and may go much further in supporting their power, and destroying their enemies." He illustrates the principles instilled concerning parental affection, marriage, and other principal sentiments and relations of man; and knowing that Rousseau was the chief model held up to the imitation of youth, whom they were enjoined, stimulated, and exhorted to copy, analyses his character, to ascertain the effects likely to result from following such an example. He also characterizes Voltaire, though with much less profound investigation than Rousseau; and Helvetius more generally than Voltaire.

The next publication of Burke on French affairs was the "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." Before this comes under consideration, it is necessary to recapitulate some parts of parliamentary history. In session 1790, after the discussion between him and Messrs. Fox and Sheridan, he had adhered uniformly to the sentiments he then avowed. He had opposed the repeal of the Test-act, and a motion for a reform in parliament. Mr. Fox and he had still continued on terms of friendship, although they did not so frequently meet. In 1791, a bill was proposed for the formation of a constitution in Canada. In discussing it Burke entered on the general principles of legislation, considered the doctrine of the *rights of man*,

proceeded to its offspring, the constitution of France, and expressed his conviction that there was a design formed in this country against its constitution.

After some members of the party had called Burke to order, Mr. Fox spoke. Mr. Fox conceiving an insinuation of maintaining republican principles, as applicable to the British constitution, to have been made against him by Mr. Pitt, * and that part of Burke's speech tending to strengthen that notion, to remove the impression, declared his conviction that the British constitution, though defective in theory, was in practice excellently adapted to this country. He repeated, however, his praises of the French revolution; he thought it, on the whole, one of the most glorious events in the history of mankind; and proceeded to express his dissent from Burke's opinions on the subject, as inconsistent with just views of the inherent rights of mankind. These, besides, were, he said, inconsistent with Burke's former principles. He contended also that the discussion of the French revolution was irrelative to the Quebec bill.

Burke, in reply, said, "Mr. Fox has treated me with harshness and malignity: after having

* On this subject, Mr. Pitt, in the course of the discussion, explained his meaning to Mr. Fox's satisfaction.

harassed with his *light troops* in the skirmishes of order, he brought THE HEAVY ARTILLERY of his own great abilities to bear on me." He maintained, that the French constitution and general system were replete with anarchy, impiety, vice, and misery; that the discussion of a new polity for a province that had been under the French, and was now under the English government, was a proper opportunity of comparing the French and British constitutions. He denied the charge of inconsistency: his opinions on government, he insisted, had been the same during all his political life. He said, Mr. Fox and he had often differed, and that there had been no loss of friendship between them: but there is something in the *cursed French constitution*, which envenoms every thing. Fox whispered, "there is no loss of friendship between us." Burke answered, "there is! I know the price of my conduct; our friendship is at an end." He concluded with exhorting the two great men that headed the opposite parties—"whether they should move in the political hemisphere, as two blazing stars in opposite orbits, or walk together as brethren, that they would preserve the British constitution, and guard it against innovation."

Mr. Fox was very greatly agitated by this renunciation of friendship, and made many concessions; but in the course of his speech still maintained that Burke had formerly held very

different principles, and that he himself had learned from him those very principles which he now reprobated. He endeavoured to support his allegation by references to measures which Burke had either proposed or promoted; and also cited ludicrous expressions and observations of his to the same purpose. This repetition of the charge of inconsistency prevented the impression which the affectionate and respectful language and behaviour, and the conciliatory apologies of Fox might have probably made on Burke. It would be difficult to determine with certainty, whether constitutional irritability or public principle was the chief cause of Burke's sacrifice of that friendship which he had so long cherished, and of which the talents and qualities of its object rendered him so worthy. However that may have been, it is certain, that Burke and Fox from this time never were on their former footing. It has been asserted also that Mr. Fox had made critical animadversions in private on the REFLEXIONS, which reached Burke's ears, mortified him as an author, and displeased him as a friend:—that he had considered it rather as an effusion of poetic genius than a philosophical investigation. As Burke certainly intended to investigate, and knew Fox to be endued with talents fit to examine and appreciate any process of reasoning, (if he allowed his mind the fair and full exertion) it was natural for him

either to be mortified, that to a man, whose judgment he so highly prized, he had appeared not able to execute his design ; or to be displeased that a partial exertion of his friend's extraordinary powers had prevented a fair decision. It is certainly natural for a writer to value what has cost him much labour and thought, and to feel mortification on unfavourable criticism, if he highly respects the judgment of the critic, or believes him impartial in that particular case ; and to be displeased, if either desultory examination or partiality produce an erroneous verdict. In allowing that Burke might have had the feelings of an author, we only admit that he was subject to the common infirmities of a man.

Some days after the discussion between Fox and Burke, the following paragraph appeared in a very able diurnal publication, in the interest of Mr. Fox and his party. “ *Morning Chronicle*, May 12, 1791. ‘ The great and firm body of the Whigs of England, true to their principles, have decided on the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke ; and the former is declared to have maintained the pure doctrines by which they are bound together, and upon which they have invariably acted. The consequence is, that Mr. Burke retires from parliament.’

Burke, presuming that this consignment to retirement, and the implied censure on his con-

duct here declared, in the confidential vehicle of the opinions and sentiments of those who now called themselves the Whigs, entered into an inquiry into the title of the opposers of his doctrines to assume that appellation. The inquiry led him also to consider the circumstances and grounds of the dispute between him and Fox. These inquiries, principally, and the criticisms by the leading men on his book, subordinately, constitute the subject of his "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." In this performance he speaks of himself in the third person, expressing himself very modestly on the literary merits of his work: he assumes a more decisive tone in speaking of its scope and tendency. While he employs much humbler language concerning his own talents than any other person of any party would use on the same subject, he bestows the full but not exaggerated praise on the powers which adorned parliament. Considering retirement as approaching, if not by relegation, by voluntary exile, he bestows the following valedictory eulogium on the characters that composed it: "Leaving the service of his country, he leaves parliament without all comparison richer in abilities than he found it. Very solid and very brilliant talents distinguish the ministerial benches. The opposite rows are a sort of seminary of genius, and have brought forth such and so great talents as never before (amongst

us at least) have appeared together. If their owners are disposed to serve their country, (he trusts they are) they are in a condition to render it services of the highest importance. If, through mistake or passion, they are led to contribute to its ruin, we shall at least have a consolation denied to the ruined country that adjoins us—we shall not be destroyed by men of mean or secondary capacities.”

He defends his reasoning on the French revolution, the propriety of discussing its principles and effects, when considering the plan of a new constitution for Canada, and maintains the consistency of his political conduct through life. “Strip him (he says) of his consistency, you leave him naked indeed.” His uniform principles he illustrates by a recapitulation of his speeches and conduct. He cites the opinions of the most renowned Whigs of the time of King William and Queen Anne, especially those delivered on the trial of Dr. Sacheverel, when the political creed of the Whigs, if ever, was freely repeated, to shew that his notions, though disapproved of by the new Whigs, are in unison with those of the old. Venerating and loving the constitution in general, his anxiety was particularly excited by the danger he apprehended to its different members at different times,—for the democracy, the aristocracy, or the monarchy, as the one or other appeared

likely to be borne down. On this subject he has the following illustration :

“ Whilst he opposes his defence on the part where the attack is mad he presumes, that for his regard to the just rights of all the rest, he has credit in every candid mind. He ought not to apprehend, that his raising fences about popular privileges this day, will infer that he ought, on the next, to concur with those who would pull down the throne: because on the next he defends the throne, it ought not to be supposed that he has abandoned the rights of the people.

“ A man who, among various objects of his equal regard, is secure of some, and full of anxiety for the fate of others, is apt to go to much greater lengths in his preference of the objects of his immediate solicitude than Mr. Burke has ever done. A man so circumstanced often seems to undervalue, to vilify, almost to reprobate and disown, those that are out of danger. This is the voice of nature and truth, and not of inconsistency and false pretence. The danger of any thing very dear to us removes, for the moment, every other affection from the mind. When Priam had his whole thoughts employed on the body of his Hector, he repels with indignation, and drives from him with a thousand reproaches, his surviving sons, who with an officious piety crowded about him to offer their assistance. A good critic (there is no better than Mr. Fox) would say,

that this is a master-stroke, and marks a deep understanding of nature in the father of poetry. He would despise a Zoilus, who would conclude from this passage that Homer meant to represent this man of affliction as hating or being indifferent and cold in his affections to the poor reliques of his house, or that he preferred a dead carcase to his living children."

This pamphlet was chiefly written in the month of July, while Burke and his family were at Margate. During that period, he seemed totally unemployed; his mornings were mostly spent in walking about the fields, and especially towards the North Foreland, whence he used to take great pleasure in viewing the ships; the evenings, in easy and familiar intercourse with many of the Margate visitors, in the libraries, or at the rooms. He there, as indeed, on every occasion, attended church regularly. He was devoutly attentive to the prayers, and also to the sermons, if the preachers kept within their sphere of moral and religious instruction; but when they departed from their official business, he could not always refrain from testifying his disapprobation. At this time there happened to be at Margate a popular preacher from the vicinity of London. That gentleman, like *the Grecian declaimer who undertook to lecture before Hannibal on the art of war*, delivered, in the presence of Burke in Margate church, a long political sermon.

Burke manifested an impatience which was observed by the whole congregation. He several times stood up, and took his hat, as if he expected that the discourse was about to end, and afterwards sat down with visible marks of disappointment and dissatisfaction. This probably arose from his dislike to political sermons, as that one was not worse than discourses in general are by persons of common abilities, who speak flippantly on subjects beyond their reach. His disapprobation of such sermons he strongly testified in the following passage in his REFLEXIONS:—"POLITICS AND THE PULPIT are terms that have little agreement. No sound ought to be heard in the church but the healing voice of Christian charity. The cause of civil liberty and civil government gains as little as that of religion by this confusion of duties. Those who quit their proper character, to assume what does not belong to them, are, for the greater part, ignorant both of the character they leave, and of the character they assume. Wholly unacquainted with the world in which they are so fond of meddling, and inexperienced in all its affairs, on which they pronounce with so much confidence, they have nothing of politics but the passions they excite. *Surely the church is a place where one day's TRUCE ought to be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind.*"

Although the "Appeal" very ably contrast-

ed the doctrines of the old Whigs with those of Paine and other writers, supported and disseminated by the new ; and the work was distinguished for closeness of reasoning and regularity of method, as well as for energy and depth of observation ; it was not equally read with his preceding performances on the subject.

At the time that Burke was adding a strong redoubt to the fortress which he had raised, the fabric underwent an attack so vigorous and so ably conducted as must have overthrown it, had not the foundation been laid very deep, and the superstructure consisted of the most massy and well disposed materials. In summer, 1791, Mackintosh's *VINDICIÆ GALLICÆ* was published. Other writers, in attacking Burke's *REFLEXIONS*, had mixed subjects foreign to that work ; had charged the author with a dereliction of former opinions, and some of them had imputed either unworthy or frivolous motives. Mr. Mackintosh, rejecting every irrelative question, proceeds to the main object. Having studied Burke's writings and conduct, and investigated their principles, he had discovered the charge of *INCONSISTENCY* to be unfounded ; and had seen that if the matter in consideration had been his general conduct, instead of a particular work ; dereliction of a former system, opinions, and action could not be a subject of just accusation. The *VINDICIÆ GALLICÆ* is very evidently the result of very great and very variegated powers and

attainments. Taste, learning, invention, judgment, eloquence, acute reasoning, profound philosophy, and habits of correct and elegant composition are most fully and happily displayed. His illustrations and allusions manifest great extent and multiplicity of knowledge; the luminous arrangement, a comprehensiveness of understanding that examines every relation of its subject; fertility of invention and correctness of judgment are shewn in framing his theory and giving it consistency; strong and animated eloquence is exhibited in various parts of the work, especially in describing the miseries of the despotism, the progress and completion of its overthrow, and the joy of its subjects on emancipation; close and perspicuous statement, vigorous argumentation is the prominent character of his discussion; profound philosophy, of his exhibitions of mind. The obvious purpose of the learned and able author is the melioration of the condition of man. Knowledge, science, and genius, prompted by philanthropy, do not always discover the most effectual means for the attainment of their ends. The perfection of reason consists in giving every object a consideration proportioned to its relative importance. This philosopher, turning his mind chiefly to possibility of happiness, rather overlooks capability of attainment. Convinced that men, habitually guided by reason, and determined by virtue, would be happier

under small than considerable restraints, he proposes a controul too feeble for the actual state of mankind; for the actual state of any men now existing; much more of a people whose national character, FROM *the old despotism*, and other causes, required a greater degree of controul than some of their neighbours. Arguing from untried theory, instead of experience, it is not surprising that the conclusions of this great man have been entirely contradicted by the event. The changes which he vindicates are too rapid FOR THE PROGRESSION of the human character. * Mr. Mackintosh's position, that considerable evil must be hazarded for the prospect of good to posterity, admits of great limitations, according to the degree and quantity of the sufferings, and the probability of the recompence.

Burke this year, on the annunciation by the French Ambassador of the acceptance of the new constitution by the King, wrote "Hints for a Memorial," to be delivered to Monsieur Montmorin. It contains an application to the existing circumstances of his general principles on the French revolution. He describes its na-

* The reader will find this subject ably explained from a view of the operations of mind, and beautifully illustrated from the analogy of nature, in Dr. William Thomson's Letter to Dr. Parr, annexed to Dr. Parr's Statement of his Dispute with Curtis.

ture and effects, and its partizans in different countries. He marks the probable progress of its spirit, he details circumstances in adjacent countries likely to promote its operation. He combats the opinion of those who thought that it would be dissolved from its own violence. It is, he thinks, invulnerable by internal attacks solely. Its resources, he alledges, are not in its credit, in its national finances, or any of the usual constituents; but in its wickedness, which makes all property subservient to its use. He sums up his arguments into three propositions:—first, that no counter-revolution is to be expected in France from internal causes solely. Secondly, That the longer the present system exists, the greater will be its strength. Thirdly, That as long as it exists in France, it would be the interest of the revolutionists to distract and revolutionize other countries. This is one of three memorials published after his death.

In 1792, the operations of French principles in this country became very extensive and very dangerous. Paine had published his *second part* of the “Rights of Man,” which may be considered as an exhortation to the subjects of existing governments, especially of Britain, TO A PRACTICAL APPLICATION of the theory of his first part. The purport of it was simply this: “I have before told you that your government is a very bad one: I now earnestly

recommmend to you to get rid of it ; pull down your monarchy, aristocracy, all your establishments, level every distinction ; *so only* can you enjoy the Rights of Man." This second part was by the societies spread with still more indefatigable industry and ardent zeal than the first. Productions connecting the speculations and precepts of Paine with the example of France, as lessons and models for this country, were widely dispersed. Thomas Paine was represented as the Minister of God dispensing light to a darkened world.* Government finding attempts to reduce these wild theories to practice, issued a proclamation recommending to individuals to discourage such writings and their probable effects ; and enjoining the magistrates to employ means for preserving the public tranquillity, which these attempts tended so much to disturb. An association, as the reader must remember, had been formed by Messrs. Sheridan, Mackintosh, Erskine, Courtenay, Lord Lauderdale, Major Maitland, Messrs. Grey, Whitbread, and Lambton, comprising great talents, property, and respectability, under the

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* Especially in a very daring daily paper of that time, the object of which was to abuse the constitution of this country. In the *Argus* there were two verses in imitation of the praise of Newton :

“ The world was hid in universal night.”

“ God said, let Paine arise, and all was light !”

name of the " Friends of the People," to procure a reform in parliament. Although the character of the individuals who composed this body, and the stake many of them had in the country, precluded every idea that their object was any thing more than a moderate reform, yet they afforded a colourable pretext to the formation of societies of a very different description and of very different views. Under pretence of seeking reform, many individuals, in every quarter of the country, established Corresponding Societies, of which it has by no means appeared, that all the members sought a moderate reform, or by peaceable means. The discussion of the proclamation brought forward the sentiments of many of the members on reform in parliament. Burke, as he had always done, declared his disapprobation of it as unnecessary, and reprobated its agitation at that time as dangerous. Other members, who had formerly been favourable to reform in parliament, opposed it then. Mr. Pitt conceiving that every political measure was to be estimated not merely on abstract principles, but on these, combined with the circumstances of the case, argued, that although a reform might have been expedient before the minds of many individuals were unhinged by Paine and his co-operators, any *change* would then be improper, when ideas of *subversion* were entertained. During the recess of 1792 the public ferment increased.

The French having dethroned their King, and

massacred their opponents, deputations were sent from the societies in England to congratulate them on the progress of light. The retreat of the Duke of Brunswick, a retreat not displeasing to some even of the moderate friends of liberty, to those, at least, who considered the good of real liberty in the abstract more than of the phantom that had assumed its name in France, greatly emboldened the democratical republicans of England, who admired that phantom. The French, elated with success, published their proffer of support to all people who should be desirous of what they (the French) termed liberty. About the capital the approaching downfall of the British constitution began to be a subject of common talk. King, Lords, and Commons, church and state, were described as on the eve of dissolution. The garrulous vanity of some of the weak and ignorant members of the democratical societies boasted of the situations they were to attain under the new order to be speedily established. There was evidently (as far as people can judge from circumstances) a design formed to overthrow the constitution; and confidence of its success.* Wisdom, indeed common prudence dictated to Government to take effectual measures for crushing pernicious designs. It may

* To accurate and impartial observers of the sentiments and opinions prevalent among many in 1792, especially in November of that year, I appeal whether this account is exaggerated.

be said that there was no proof of the existence of a plot sufficient to bring the supposed conspirators to trial. That was, doubtless, very true at that time ; but there are certainly numberless cases which call for the vigilance of deliberative assemblies, which could not be evinced on a judicial trial.

Burke, on the commencement of the war between the German potentates and the French republic, had sent his son to Coblenz, with the knowledge and approbation of Government, in order to know the dispositions of the allied Powers. From the apparent want of concert between these potentates, he did not augur highly of the success of their efforts. It was early his opinion that nothing short of a general combination of established governments, co-operating with the royalists of France, could subdue a system, which, if not crushed, he conceived would be destructive to all existing society. Soon after the retreat of the King of Prussia, and the subsequent successes of the republicans, he wrote the second memorial contained in his posthumous works. He exhorted this country to take the lead in forming a general combination for the repression of French power and of French principles. Before this was published the opening of the Scheldt, and the acts of France to promote her own aggrandizement, and also measures and decrees tending to interfere with the internal government of this country, had produced hostilities.

The internal dangers of the nation had excited a general association in defence of liberty and property against republicans and levellers. The militia was embodied, other precautions were taken by the executive government, and parliament was assembled. Burke coincided with Ministry in contending that great danger existed to this constitution and country from Jacobinical principles, and designs abroad and at home. The Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Spencer, and other leading men of the old Whig interest; Lord Stormont, Lord Carlisle, Lord Loughborough, and, except Messrs. Adam, Courtenay, and Lord Guildford, the principal men of the North part of the coalition, were impressed with the same alarm, and also the learned, ingenious, and able friend of Burke, Mr. Windham. Mr. Fox and his party ridiculed the idea of internal danger, considered the invasion of France as a combination of despots against freedom, and declared their joy at the compelled retreat of the Prussians and Austrians. Fox censured Ministry for removing from the Guards officers who had sought and received fraternity from the enemies of kingly government abroad, and were connected with societies inimical to the British constitution at home. Mr. Fox, indeed, seems to have retained his admiration of the French spirit when it was evidently producing effects contrary to what, if he had attended chiefly to them, his patriotism, benevolence, and wisdom could

have approved. With a mind of a force and comprehension which few have equalled, he did not always turn his attention to the whole "circuit of affairs." Possessing intellectual *optics* which nothing within the reach of man could elude, *his views* were not always equally circumspect. One object sometimes engaged his mind so much as to prevent the due consideration of others equally important. Adopting a principle, he was sometimes guided by it too implicitly, without subjecting it to the modifications, or bounding it by the limits which were necessary either to just deduction or prudent measures. On certain occasions the powers of his extraordinary genius have been exerted rather in the invention of the most apposite means, than in the choice of the wisest ends. The love of liberty, a sentiment so natural to a noble and generous mind, and so congenial to the feelings of an Englishman, so much occupied this great man, that he cherished its excesses, and even its counterfeit; a counterfeit producing the greatest mischiefs, both to its votaries and their neighbours. The question was not, whether foreign despots, attacking a free country, deserved the support or opposition of a free country, and the good wishes of its citizens? If stated in that abstract form, it must certainly be answered in the negative. But whether a nation of known ambition, increased energy, in the career of external conquest, stimulating internal discord in all countries to

which its agents had access, was not to be repressed, because, in the attempt to check, we must have the assistance of arbitrary powers? This was the reasoning of Burke and Windham, in which they, on the whole, coincided with Dundas, Grenville, and Pitt. The question of expediency of war with France was certainly a subject concerning which men of the greatest talents and best intentions might differ, according to the view they took of it; as, indeed, such men did differ. Those who are thoroughly satisfied of the justice and policy of the war with France, unless uncandid, must admit, that of the able men who opposed it, THEIR CHARACTER and THEIR STAKE in the country was a ground for believing that most of them opposed it from conviction.

Never did parliamentary eloquence shine with more lustre than during the debates relative to the internal state of the country and the war with France. The subject was, indeed, of much more extensive and complicated importance, and of still nearer interest, than that of America itself. Parliament contained a still greater assemblage of genius * than during the discussion with the colonies. Burke never ex-

* The speeches of Messrs. Dundas, Windham, and Burke, on the effects of the new doctrines in this kingdom; those of Lord Grenville and of Mr. Pitt on the conduct of France and the causes of the war, contain most important information concerning that momentous period; as do those of their opponents very great ingenuity.

erted his mind with more energy during the vigour of his age, than now that he had attained his grand climacteric. But as he considered the questions agitated as of infinitely greater moment, he was still more anxious to have other members, whose talents he admired and venerated, of the same sentiments and opinion with himself. He was peculiarly desirous to impress Fox with his own notion of the pernicious materials of which the French system was composed, the direful effects that had proceeded, and were likely to proceed from it, the necessity of the most vigorous efforts to repress its extension, and even to crush its existence. Entertaining the very highest opinion of his extraordinary talents, he urged his co-operation, and was disappointed to displeasure when he failed of success. In these opinions and sentiments we see the origin of his Letter to the Duke of Portland, "on the Conduct of Domestic Parties." The letter was never intended to be made public. It was designed for the perusal of his Grace and Lord Fitzwilliam only, to account to these noblemen for his disapprobation of the most active members of that party, with which they still continued in some degree to act; and deposited with the Duke, not to be read by him and his friend until a separation from Mr. Fox, which he perceived must take place, should ensue. A rough draft of the letter had been copied by the amanuensis whom he employed. From that a sur-

reptitious copy was printed in the beginning of 1797, in which the title was falsified; and it was represented to be "fifty-four articles of impeachment against the Right Hon. Charles James Fox." An injunction from Chancery was applied for immediately by the friends of Burke; but too late; the mischief was done. By the treachery of a confidential agent, a paper was given to the public which was intended for the private perusal of two friends. On hearing of the publication, Burke, then at Bath, wrote Dr. Lawrence the letter which he quotes.* There he says, "Wherever this matter comes into discussion, I authorize you to contradict the infamous reports, which (I am informed) have been given out, that this paper had been circulated through the Ministry, and was intended gradually to slide into the press." "But I beg you and my friends to be cautious how you let it be understood that I disclaim any thing but the mere act and intention of publication. I do not retract any one of the sentiments contained in that memorial, which was and is my justification, addressed to the friends, for whose use alone I intended it. Had I designed it for the public I should have been more exact and full. It was written in a tone of indignation, in consequence of the resolutions of the Whig Club, †

* Preface to Burke's Posthumous Works.

† In the Whig Club, at their meeting in February 1793, Lord William Russell proposed a resolution approving of

which were directly pointed against myself and others, and occasioned our secession from that club; which is the last act of my life that I shall under any circumstances repent. Many temperaments and explanations there would have been, if ever I had a notion that it should meet the public eye."

Burke had in 1792 privately used every effort in his power to bring Fox to join in what he considered as the salvation of his country. Alarmed as he was at the progress of French principles in this country, rapidly accelerated by the success of its power on the continent, he conceived the preservation of the constitution, of the country, of every thing dear to Britons, to be in the power of Fox. "With Mr. Fox (said he) we may save the country; even without him we ought to attempt it." His regret and displeasure at the failure of his attempts has probably led him to an asperity in his strictures upon Fox in this letter to the Duke of Portland, which many, who agree with Burke's sentiments and opinions on the general questions, will think unjust. Every measure

the conduct of Mr. Fox, and expressed in such a manner as to convey a censure on those members who had of late differed with him in political sentiments and conduct. Burke, Windham, and other eminent men, who considered themselves as implicated in the censure, desired to withdraw their names from the club.

of the Minority during that period, every opposition to the plans of Government respecting internal or external politics, he censures, and charges them all on Mr. Fox. Even societies to which he gave no countenance, “ the Friends of the People,” “ the Friends of the Freedom of the Press,” are presumed by him to be objects of reprobation, and Fox to be principally blameable, because he supposes he might have prevented their formation. Here Mr. Burke makes two suppositions the ground of an inference. First, that the two societies in question are inimical to the constitution ; a supposition not probable, from the character and interest of the members that *formed* either ; nor justified by their subsequent conduct. Secondly, that Fox could have prevented that formation ; which is not certain.

In summer 1793, the political labours of Burke had an agreeable relaxation in his visit to Oxford, when his friend, the Duke of Portland, was to be installed Chancellor of the university ; a ceremony which was conducted with great dignity and splendour. Burke received the most flattering marks of attention, both in public and private, from the principal persons who composed the meeting. During this week he was the guest of the Rev. Mr. Winstanley, Principal of Alban-hall and Camden Professor of Ancient History ; a gentleman for whom he always manifested a particular esteem, and whose interest he endeavoured, on all occasions, to promote. This circumstance, with innu-

merable others of the like nature, might be adduced in contradiction to the assertion, that Burke was not a warm friend of literary merit.*

Young Mr. Burke was, at this time, with Mr. Windham, Mr. Malone, the Hon. Frederick North, and others, admitted to the honorary degree of L L. D.

The eagerness of Burke to repress French principles and power appeared this summer, in the joy he discovered on hearing the news of the taking of Valenciennes. Mr. Dundas dispatched a messenger to communicate the tid-

* Another assertion, equally ill-founded, that Burke's knowledge of languages was superficial, stands refuted by unquestionable authority. Mr. Winstanley, in a letter to a friend, expresses himself in the following terms, which, though unauthorized, I take the liberty to transcribe.

“ It would be indeed as useless, as it would be presumptuous, in me, to attempt to add to the reputation of Mr. Burke. Among the studies to which I have immediately applied, there is one, which, from his attention to the more important concerns of active life, it might be supposed that he had overlooked:—I mean that of ancient and modern languages. Those, however, who were acquainted with the universality of his information, will not be surprised to hear that it would be exceedingly difficult to have met with a person who knew more of the philosophical history and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke.”

The character of Mr. Winstanley, as a man profoundly skilled both in the ancient and modern languages, stamps an authority upon his judgment, sufficient to overturn all vague assertion, that Burke was little acquainted with the learned tongues.

ings to Mr. Burke, whom he found at a country theatre, at Charlefont, some miles from Beaconsfield. Burke, on reading the letter, went upon the stage, and read it to the audience with every mark of delight. Towards the close of the year, when affairs wore a less favourable aspect to the Allies, he wrote a third memorial, entitled "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies with respect to France." In this paper he intimates, that the object of the several allied Powers was evidently private aggrandizement more than the support of legitimate government, religion, and property, against Jacobinism. He gives a very pathetic description of the dreadful state of France under the existing anarchy; and contends that whatever partial changes may take place, that while the principles continue, similar misery, if not the same, is to be expected; that the reduction of parts of the French territories under the dominion of any of the Allies could not promote the wisest purpose of the war. The only certain means of restoring order, religion, and property in France, was, by committing the chief direction of every thing respecting her internal affairs to the emigrant princes, nobility, gentry, and clergy. These, which he calls the "Moral France," ought to have the arrangement of the government now usurped over the arithmetical and geographical France. Under them only could it be expected; he thought;

that the blessings of religion, order, virtue, and property could be established. After the great convulsions and the state of anarchy then prevalent, it was his opinion, that the establishment of a fixed and permanent constitution could not be effected without the preparatory exercise, by those classes, of something approaching to a military government. When that should be fixed, he recommends a scheme of "discriminating justice, tempered with enlightened mercy," of the greatest wisdom, if it were expedient that those classes should possess the power which it pre-supposes. It might be a question with many, whether these emigrants, either in their general conduct and characters, or in their behaviour, had exhibited such talents and qualities as would render a discretionary power in their possession likely to form a good government. At the same time, those who think the most meanly of the emigrants as a body, will allow that there was some probability that any government they had contrived could not be more inconsistent with liberty and happiness, than the Robersperian and succeeding schemes in France.

The vigilance of Government, and the prevention of all communication with France, had repressed, but not crushed the doctrines of Paine and his coadjutors. Of the new theories, there were gradations and classes, adapted to different kinds of readers or hearers. For the

vulgar there were the vehement declamation, the unqualified invective, the poignant abuse, the well aimed sophistry of Paine himself, and on his plan. As genius invents, humbler talents imitate. There were thousands of Jacobinical writers, who endeavoured to accommodate his notions, speculations, and precepts, to the varying circumstances of affairs, in order the more effectually to inflame. Demagogues, calling themselves political lecturers, did their best to promote the same end of exciting disaffection, desire of innovation, and the consequent action. As the lessons of Paine and his imitators in writing, and the efforts of Thelwall and his fellow labourers, could produce effect among only the very lowest and most ignorant, there were authors of a higher cast of literature, though much beneath the abilities of Paine. By these novels were constructed to misrepresent the existing institutions, orders, and classes, to readers of a taste above relishing the coarseness of Paine, or the feebleness and ignorance of itinerant lecturers. There were others to devise systems of philosophy, to please those that dabbled in what they supposed metaphysics. These set themselves about overthrowing the doctrines of religion and a future state; free agency, natural affection, friendship, and patriotism; that thus philanthropy might not operate in the cases in which it was most likely to produce happiness,—

as a moral improvement: they proposed the dissolution of all government, the annihilation of property, and the levelling of ranks and distinctions,—*as a political improvement*. To excite, foment, or increase discontent among the uninformed, there were Paine and coadjutors; for persons of more taste and knowledge, but with confined views of mankind, there were Holcroft's novels; for those that had a glimmering of metaphysics, and who, engaging in what they did not understand, forgot what they did, there was Godwin. Paine, Holcroft, and Godwin had established three great banks of anarchy and infidelity (there might be much greater capitalists that did not avow themselves) whose notes inferior dealers took, and circulated for current cash.

Inflamed by teachers and ministers of sedition, many of the populace conceived themselves to be totally deprived of their rights, and that nothing would restore them but a national convention. A plan of this sort having been tried in Edinburgh, and a meeting having taken place, under that name, in which also the subordinate phraseology of the French was adopted, to shew the model of imitation; the meeting having been dispersed by the activity of the chief magistrate, and the leaders punished, an assembly of the same kind * was

* A national convention of delegates having, by our constitution, no authority to alter the government; but, according

preparing to be held in England. While the societies, their committees, and sections, by their proceedings, severally and jointly, shewed the *object* to be a change, not indeed exactly defined, but obviously not consistent with the existing constitution of this country, and *by means* not warranted by its laws. These plans verified the predictions of Burke respecting the effect of wild theories in this country, as the whole system of the French operations, in principle and detail, in every transfer of power, had verified his predictions concerning their effect in France. The issue of the trials that followed the inquiry concerning the proceedings of the societies, does not, in the least, affect the predictions of Burke. All that the acquittal proved, was, that the jury did not receive the legal definition of treason in the same sense in which the Attorney-General used it as the ground of the indictment ; or the grand jury as the ground for finding a bill. There might be devised by the fertile invention of wickedness many modes of conduct of equal moral culpability and political hurt with those that are punishable capitally. Every impartial man will see grounds for inference in cases where there are not grounds for verdicts.

Burke had resolved to retire from parliament

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to Paine's Rights of Man, necessary to regenerate the government of Britain,

when the trial of Hastings should be finished. This summer a sentence was passed, and Burke soon after resigned his seat.

During the important period of Burke's parliamentary life, the eloquence of the senate had received very considerable improvement. Able men took a wider range of knowledge; investigated more profoundly; and thus their discussions, besides their immediate applicability to the questions at issue, contained a much greater quantity of general truth. Although this effect may be in some degree owing to the progression of philosophy, yet it has been considerably accelerated by individual genius. In Fox's orations we have found, from the commencement of his intimacy with Burke, a more rapid advancement in political philosophy than even his own great mind would probably so soon have produced. All those who admire the force of his eloquence, (and who, that possesses taste, and, what is of more consequence, comprehension of understanding, that does not?) if they have attentively considered its progression, will acknowledge that Burke's conversation, speeches, and writings have tended to enhance its value. Mr. Grey, Lord Lauderdale, Duke of Bedford, Messrs. Courtenay, Erskine, Sheridan, and other distinguishing observers, who look up to Fox as the highest where they themselves are high, will admit that great additions have been made to the attainments of their friend by Ed-

mund Burke. Great minds only can derive great accessions of intellectual riches from intellectual treasures. There is a gentleman of the first talents, cultivated by literature and disciplined by science, who has profited beyond most men from the example and lessons of Burke, as his mind was more peculiarly fitted for receiving the advantages, not by nature only, but by a similar course of previous study. Mr. Windham, before he entered parliament, had bestowed very great attention on letters and philosophy, and had attained uncommon excellence in logical closeness, acute reasoning, and profound investigation. Intimately acquainted with other men of letters, and a most favourite companion of the Litchfield sage, he had a mind well fitted by nature, and prepared by pursuit and habit, for receiving the wisdom of Burke. Between men of congenial minds, intimacy is generally the follower of acquaintance. Mr. Windham soon became the most confidential friend of the illustrious personage. Like Burke, he loved liberty as the means of happiness ; venerated the British constitution, as the best preserver of freedom to that extent. Thoroughly acquainted with the human mind, he perceived that the surest ratiocinative guide was experience ; and was, therefore, like his friend, an enemy to speculative innovations. His speeches are less those of an orator that wishes to impress your feelings, than of a

philosopher, who seeks to inform, convince, and expand your understanding. His orations were less frequent than those of many very inferior speakers, (at least very inferior reasoners) he seldom spoke much, unless on important subjects; but the knowledge, the argumentation, the philosophy exhibited by him when he did speak, had rendered his character very high; as also the estimation in which he was held by the party of which he was a member, and by those of the opposite side. From his own rules of reasoning he had judged unfavourably of the French system, proceeding on principles so very contrary. The expanded philosophy of his friend confirmed the conclusions of his own mind. He reprobated the new order of France, and dreaded it when practically held up as a model for Britain. Then did his powers fully unfold themselves. In the discussions on the internal state of the country, as affected by the dissemination of levelling doctrines, animated by the momentous subject, he displayed an energetic eloquence that few could equal; but that he himself has since equalled, when occasions arose to call forth his MIND.

On the same subject, the internal state of the country, Mr. Dundas had very fully displayed his intellectual powers: powers, which those who confound principals and adjuncts do not justly estimate; but those who can, in their ope-

rations, appreciate the qualities of mind, highly value. Official habits of business so easily master common details, that it is not reckoned a proof of great talents to be distinguished *as a man of business*. To transact affairs in the precedented routine is certainly a matter of no ingenuity or ability; but that is no proof that great ability may not be shewn in the transaction of affairs. Mr. Dundas is distinguished not merely for business, but for the ready comprehension of the most complicated details and intricate relations; for instantaneous perception of the case, application of the principle, decision of resolution, and promptness of dispatch. Both in the senate and in office he is most peculiarly eminent for immediately taking off the husk, and finding the kernel. An understanding naturally strong, had been exerted in his profession long enough to invigorate * his faculties without contracting their exertion. He too, for a long period of his parliamentary life, rarely spoke, unless on great occasions. On these he shewed the readiness of his penetration, the extent of appropriate knowledge, and the masculine strength of his intellect. One proof of his penetration was, that he first perceived the nature of a very great mind, and its fitness even in early youth for that situation

* See Burke's character of Mr. Grenville.

which generally requires maturity of years to be united with genius.

August 2, 1794, Mr. Burke met with a domestic loss, which afflicted him very heavily, in the death of his only son. That gentleman had given proofs of considerable abilities. Those who were most intimate with him give him the praise of a clear, acute, and vigorous understanding; and affirm that, if his health had permitted the close and intense application which he was disposed to bestow, he would have equalled most men of his age. Even with the interrupted attention which he was able to give, he had acquired the high opinion of men of rank and talents; an opinion which his conduct as agent for the Roman Catholics of Ireland confirmed. On the nomination of Lord Fitzwilliam to the viceroyalty of Ireland, Mr. Burke was appointed his secretary; but his premature death intervened. He was deeply conversant in the history and constitution both of Ireland and Britain. He is said to have ministered to the genius of his father in collating some of the instances of speeches and opinions by old Whigs, to whom his father appeals from the new. He died at Cromwell-house, Brompton, aged 36, and was buried in Beaconsfield church. His father could never after bear to see the place of his interment; and when going from his villa to town, instead of coming through Beaconsfield, he took a cross road behind an eminence which

intercepted the sight of the church. But although he felt his sorrows as a man, he bore them as a man. His grief was "strong and deep," (says the Editor of his *Posthumous Works*) "but it never relaxed the vigour of his mind, whatever subject called upon him to exert it; nor the interest which he took, to the last moment, in the public weal." *

On the subject of the Irish Catholics, the opinion of Burke, as often expressed, and particularly in his Letter to Sir Hercules Langrish, was, that a gradual and modified relief should be granted to them, so that they might finally be raised to a level with other dissenters.

At the state trials, Burke's name had been very freely mentioned by the first judicial orator of this country and age. Some months after, on the return of Lord Fitzwilliam, when the causes of the recall were the subject of inquiry by the Peers, the Duke of Norfolk threw out some reflections against Mr. Burke, "as having written a book, which, amidst much splendour of eloquence, contained much pernicious doctrine, and had provoked, on the other side, a very mischievous answer." † This attack drew from Burke a reply, in which he also took notice of the animadversions made on his works

* The beginning of the same year he lost his brother Richard, whom he most affectionately loved.

† Preface to *Posthumous Works*, page 67.

at the trials. The letter is dated May 26, 1795; and shews that his domestic affliction had not impaired the vigour of his faculties: it was addressed to his highly prized friend Mr. Windham. Burke directs chiefly against his opponents his versatile, sportive, but strong and sarcastic humour. He enters into a most eloquent vindication of his own conduct respecting the French revolution, protesting that his object was the preservation of that religion, virtue, and happiness, which the French system was using every effort to destroy. He strongly expresses his regret that the King of Prussia had abandoned the alliance; and endeavours to demonstrate that nothing short of a general combination, pursuing the same object in concert, will prevent the French system from overwhelming Europe.

Soon after the death of his son, the King was pleased to settle a considerable pension on him and Mrs. Burke. His detractors had alledged that his embarrassed circumstances had been the cause of the part he took in the French revolution; that he wished to conciliate the favour of Ministry, and thought this a very advantageous opportunity. To assign motives is so much easier than to combat arguments, that it is not surprising that many of Mr. Burke's opponents have chosen that mode. To promote effectually even the purposes of malignity, requires an invention not merely following the

suggestions of malice, but regarding also consistency and probability. The general character of Burke, his sacrifice of interest to principle, or even to party, with very little intermission from the year 1765 to 1790 (for it cannot well be doubted, that if he had chosen to sacrifice other considerations to his interest, he might have got into office) renders the charge improbable. What, however, is improbable may be true. It is *possible* that one may act the part of an honest disinterested man for twenty-five years, and turn a rogue the twenty-sixth. But it is to be presumed he will not become so gratuitously. Supposing, as Mr. M'Cormick asserts, that Edmund Burke had humbly applied to Ministry to admit him as one of their creatures, would he desert all his old friends for nothing? If he became the tool of corruption, where was the bribe? If he attacked French liberty to please the British Ministry; if, to gratify them, he attempted to shew the evils of untried theories, and especially of such a theory as theirs, he certainly conducted himself very foolishly in procuring no emolument, no appointment, no official situation from them during the time that he bore the brunt of the battle. While in parliament, and that he could effectually serve them, he received nothing. The pension was presented to him when he was no longer in a situation to give them his assistance. It must therefore have been some

other cause, not a bargain for gain, that made him attack the French system. Besides, if he were ever so corrupt, his arguments depended upon their intrinsic force, not on his motives for wielding that force.

His pension having become the subject of disapprobation from Lord Lauderdale and the Duke of Bedford, he, in the beginning of 1796, wrote a Letter to a noble Lord, (Lord Fitzwilliam) on the strictures made on him by Lord Lauderdale and the Duke of Bedford. There are occasions on which it becomes a duty to assert one's own merits. This Burke does in the letter in question. Firmly, but without arrogance, he goes over his reform plans, his proceedings respecting India, and others of the principal acts of his life. What he says of his services to this country, impartial examiners of his conduct must think MUCH LESS than truth would have justified, or even occasion required. The retrospective view of the means by which the Duke of Bedford's ancestors acquired their property must have been the mere effect of anger at a censure passed on a just recompence, and not intended as reasoning. It is generally said that Burke's account of the Russell acquirements is erroneous; but however that may be, it was foreign to the purpose. The Duke of Bedford had a right to inquire into the disposal of the public money. Mr Burke could have proved, as Lord Grenville did prove,

that in that case it was a tribute to merit. The argument against the Duke of Bedford's conduct, from what Lord Keppel, his uncle, would have thought, had he been alive, is also irrelative. But with some objections to particular arguments, this letter displays an extent of knowledge, a brilliancy of fancy, and a force of genius that shew it to be *BURKE ALL OVER*. * The allusion (page 3.) to *John Zisca's* skin is not new to Burke: in 1782 he had applied it to Mr. Fox, when ill, and, as Burke had some apprehension, dangerously. The following passage on the loss of his son is peculiarly pathetic :

“ Had it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family; † I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste, in honour, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and every liberal accomplish-

* A reviewer having met a friend who had read this letter before he himself had perused it, asked him what he thought of it? The gentleman answered, “ it is *Burke all over*.”

English Review, April 1796.

† It is believed that a peerage had been intended for Burke; but that, on the death of his son, the intention was abandoned, as an unavailing honour.

ment, would not have shewn himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His Grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged more to mine than to me. He would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any stagnant wasting reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have repurchased the bounty of the crown, and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was made a public creature ; and had no enjoyment whatever, but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment, the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

“ But a Disposer, whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me ; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours ; I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth ! There, and prostrate here, I most unfeignedly recognize the Divine justice, and in some degree submit to it.”

In the letter to the Duke of Bedford he alludes to the efforts of that nobleman, and other illustrious characters, to stir up an opposition to the treason and seditious-meeting bills. These bills he thought highly expedient, and the last absolutely necessary. Seditious meetings, he had been long aware, had become very prevalent, especially those for the purpose of hearing demagogues abuse the constitution, in what they called lectures. Weak and ignorant as these lecturers were, he does not, therefore, think them harmless, and recommends to Government effectually to shut up such schools of rebellion and Jacobinism. Wisdom neglects no agent of mischief, however personally contemptible. Edmund Burke advises Ministry to guard against the machinations of John Thelwall.

Burke now spent his time almost entirely in the country. In his literary studies, in the soothing company of his wife and friends, in the pleasing prospect of being able to satisfy every just demand, and to leave a competent provision for the faithful and affectionate partner of his cares, in the exercise of active benevolence, and in the consciousness of having done his duty, he received all the consolation, for the irreparable loss he had sustained, of which he was susceptible. While he had employed every effort which a philanthropic heart

could prompt, and the wisest head could direct, for stimulating civilized governments to combat irreligion, impiety, immorality, inhumanity, cruelty, and anarchy, he in a narrower sphere relieved, to the utmost of his power, those who had suffered exile and proscription from the direful system. His heart, his house, his purse, were open to the distressed emigrants. Through his beneficent contribution and influence, a school was instituted in his neighbourhood, for the education of those whose parents, from adherence to principle, were unable to afford to their children useful tuition. This school still continues to flourish, and by the judicious choice of teachers, to answer the wise and humane purposes of the institution.

While thus promoting the advantage of foreign sufferers, he did not relax in his attention to the humble and industrious of his own countrymen. He continued to encourage and superintend benefit clubs among the labourers and mechanics of Beaconsfield, and was himself a subscriber for their advantage. The object was to encourage industry, to cherish affection, to establish a fund of provision for the sick and aged, which should not be merely eleemosinary, where frugality and activity should be the means, in some degree, of independence, and to cheer parents with the prospect of having their children instructed in religion, virtue, and the knowledge useful for their stations. The in-

stitution flourished under the auspices of its founder. I conversed, at Beaconsfield, with several of its members, soon after the author was no more, and from their plain unlettered sense received the strongest conviction of the goodness of the plan and the wisdom of the regulations ; and in the emotion of their hearts, the expression of their countenance, the flowing of their tears, saw much more than I could have perceived from words,—their adoring gratitude and admiration.

These exercises of private beneficence did not withdraw his mind from the consideration of the public interest. When the appearance of melioration in the principles and government of France induced our Sovereign, desirous if possible to restore to his people the blessings of peace, to make overtures for conciliation with the French Directory, Burke resumed his pen. Having found that all his predictions from the principles and first phenomena of the French system had been verified, and been in detail even worse than he had forboded,—that they disavowed every religious and moral obligation which regulates the conduct of men,—he totally disapproved of agreements with them, their probable adherence to which would presuppose that they admitted the same rules of morality as other men. His opinion he supported in his “ Thoughts on the Prospect of a Regicide Peace.” Never had the force of his

wonderful genius more completely manifested itself than in this work, which he wrote under the idea that it was not long to precede his death. Of its general excellence we cannot have an abler description than in the introduction to the review of it by the "British Critic."*

"Accustomed as we are, in common with most other reading men of this country, to contemplate with admiration the powers and resources of Mr. Burke's extraordinary mind, we have found ourselves more impressed than usual with the letters now before us ; more than by any publication which has come from his pen since the celebrated book of 1790, on the French revolution. We have seen even more regular and finished excellence in this than in that composition. The splendors of that tract were sudden and astonishing ; they flashed like lightning upon the reader, and left him afterwards, for a time, in a state of comparative darkness ; but here all is luminous, and the fire of the irradiating mind shines steadily from the beginning to the end. The energy and beauty of the language, the force and liveliness of the images, the clearness and propriety of the historical allusions and illustrations, all combine to give an effect to these letters, not easily rivalled by the pen of any other writer. Age

* For December 1796, page 661.

has certainly not impaired the genius of Mr. Burke ; he asserts himself to be on the verge of the grave : “ whatever I write, (says he) is in its nature testamentary ;” yet he writes with the vigour of a man who had just attained the maturity of his talents.”

The amount of his reasoning is this :—The system of France is impious, enormously wicked, and destructive to all within its sphere : we must either conquer it, or be destroyed ourselves. Peace would enable it to operate rapidly to our ruin : let us, therefore, avoid peace. Although the idea of eternal war with the Jacobins must, to us of common apprehension, appear extravagant, and ultimately ruinous, yet it must be admitted that the views and conduct of the French rulers are such as to shew that peace is at present impracticable, and to justify Burke’s reasoning as applicable to present circumstances. Considering peace as the most pernicious policy, he exhorts his countrymen to vigour and perseverance in combatting an irremediable evil. His exhortation is very eloquent, and, as far as respects present circumstances, replete with the soundest reasoning and most salutary lessons of conduct. To encourage the exertion absolutely necessary for the salvation of the country, he shews that our resources are such as, if wisely directed to the great and main object, may save the country.

His eloquence, founded in truth, addresses to his fellow subjects the most powerful motives to bring into action their physical and moral resources. "A dreadful evil impends. By energetic efforts we can be saved ; by pusillanimity, relaxation, or indifference, we must be ruined."

I shall forbear selecting passages from this extraordinary work, because it has been so recently in the hands of all readers.

Several answers were attempted to Burke's "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace ;" some of them very abusive. Burke, had, indeed, at almost every period of his life been the object of scurrility and invective : attacks which all eminent men must pay, who speak and act according to their own perceptions of truth and of rectitude. The part that he took on the French revolution, and on the dissemination of Jacobinical doctrines in these realms, made him detested by all those who wished these doctrines to be reduced to practice. Catiline's *Rights of Man* conspirators reviled Cicero. Burke threw upon their designs light : they loved darkness better. The description of the English Jacobins in the "Regicide Peace," so just and so animated, inflamed that body with rage. One of their apostles, in a rhapsody of abuse, comprising almost every scurrilous term the language could afford, has a conclusion, which the "Monthly Review" notices as very

laughable. “ John Thelwall calls Edmund Burke a scribbler!” The “ Thoughts” underwent in the “ Monthly Review” the ablest and most complete discussion that any work of the author had undergone since Mackintosh’s answer to the “ Reflexions.”

Burke respected genius and learning, even in an opponent. The author of the “ *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*” was invited to spend the Christmas holidays, 1796, at Beaconsfield; where familiar conversation added, if possible, to his admiration of Burke. Soon after that time Burke went to Bath, as his health was in a bad state; but in the course of the Spring he recovered.

Mr. M’Cormick, in mentioning an advertisement published by Mr. Owen, relatively to him and Mr. Burke, * conceives that the severity of the advertisement hastened the death of Burke. If it would have been any glory to have accelerated to the world the loss of Edmund Burke, the framer of the advertisement must rest his fame on some other grounds. The advertise-

* The reader, no doubt, remembers a surreptitious copy of the “ Regicide Peace” being offered to the public by Mr. Owen, but stopped by an injunction of Chancery, preventing this invasion of literary property. Mr. Owen’s own account was, that he had been desired to account for the profits of the Letter concerning the Duke of Bedford, though not compelled to refund; that therefore he published what did not belong to him. His own reasoning is sufficient to enable us to form a just judgment.

ment was in November 1796, and Mr. Burke was in good health four months after. The petty attempts of malignity, during his life, to disturb his peace were as unavailing as the petty attempts of malignity after his death are to blacken his character. On his return to Beaconsfield, he proceeded in the plan of which the "Regicide Peace" was a part; and, although Heaven was not pleased to permit him to finish his task, there is in this, the last of his works,* the same accuracy, minuteness, and extent of knowledge; the same sportiveness of humour; the same brilliancy of fancy, vigour, and variety of argument; the same grand comprehensiveness of view, that had for forty years distinguished the productions of Edmund Burke. Having, in the former letters on the same subject, established the necessity (at least in the existing circumstances) of perseverance in the war with France, and stated the sufficiency of our resources, he in this part gives a complete enumeration of our means of carrying on the contest, in the richness of the country and the spirit of its inhabitants. He anxiously wishes that other nations might so awaken to a sense of their real interests, as to combine in the most vigorous opposition to a system carried on on the avowed maxims of

* And hitherto the last of his posthumous publications.

robbery ; but his chief object was to rouse his own country. His last advice is to succumb not under difficulties : “ unite vigilance and courage ; guard against your ambitious and insolent foe, who will, if he can, enslave you, his most detested, as most dreaded enemies, as he has done others ; but he cannot enslave you, if you are stedfastly determined to defend yourselves.” His health, from the beginning of June, rapidly declined ; but his body only, not his mind, was affected. His understanding operated with undiminished force and uncontracted range : his dispositions retained their sweetness and amiableness. He continued regularly and strenuously to perform the duties of religion and benevolence : his concern for the happiness of his friends and the welfare of mankind was equally vivid. His goodness even extended to uneasiness on account of the fatigue and trouble of attending his sick-bed, occasioned to the inmates of his house. When his favourite domestics, confidential friends, and nearest connections, were eager to bestow the nightly attendance of nurses, he solicitously importuned them not to deprive themselves of rest. Although his body was in a state of constant and perceptible decay, yet was it without pain. The lamp of life was consuming fast, but was not violently extinguished. The week in which he died he conversed with literary and political friends, on various sub-

jects of knowledge, and especially on the awful posture of affairs. He repeatedly requested their forgiveness, if ever he had offended them, and conjured them to make the same request in his name to those of his friends that were absent. Friday, July the 7th, he spent the morning in a recapitulation of the most important acts of his life, the circumstances in which he acted, and the motives by which he was prompted; shewed that his comprehensive mind retained the whole series of public affairs, and discussed his own conduct in the arduous situations he had had to encounter. Dwelling particularly on the French revolution, and on the separation from admired friends, which it had occasioned, he spoke with pleasure of the conscious rectitude of his intentions; and intreated that, if any unguarded asperity of his had offended them, to believe that no offence was meant. He expressed his forgiveness of all who had, either on that subject or for any other cause, endeavoured to injure him. The evening he spent in less agitating conversation, and in listening to the essays of Addison, his favourite author. The next morning, after some time spent in devotion, and after bearing a most pathetic and impressive testimony to the excellent conduct of his wife in situations of difficulty and distress, as well as through the whole course of their relation, he fell into a slumber; and when he awoke, being very placid and composed,

again desired to hear some of the elegant essays of the Christian moralist. The last subjects of his literary attention were the INCULCATIONS OF PRACTICAL WISDOM, GUIDING TO TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL HAPPINESS. He frequently had, during his last illness, declared, what his intimates knew well before, his thorough belief of the Christian religion, his veneration for true Christians of all persuasions ; but his own preference of the articles of the church of England. In that mode of faith he was educated, and that he preserved through life. His end was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await, the appointed hour of his dissolution. He had conversed for some time, with his usual force of thought and expression, on the gloomy state of his country, for the welfare of which his heart was interested to the last beat. His young friend, Mr. Nagle, coming to his bed side, after much interesting and tender conversation, he expressed a desire to be carried to another apartment. Mr. Nagle, with the assistance of servants, was complying with his request, when Mr. Burke, faintly uttering, " God bless you !" fell back, and breathed his last, Saturday July 8th, 1797, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

On Saturday the 15th he was interred. His funeral was attended by the Duke of Portland, Lord Fitzwilliam, Mr. Windham, Dr. Lawrence, and many others of the nobility and gentry. The pall bearers were :—

The LORD CHANCELLOR,	Duke of DEVONSHIRE,
Duke of PORTLAND,	Earl FITZWILLIAM,
SPEAKER of the HOUSE of	Earl of INCHQUIN,
COMMONS,	The Rt. Hon. Mr. WINDHAM.
Sir GILBERT ELLIOT,	

Not the least affecting part of this solemn scene were the members of those benevolent institutions which the deceased had patronized, in deep, though plain mourning, performing the last duties to their revered benefactor. He was buried in Beaconsfield church, and, by his own desire, close to his son.

A sermon was preached in the church the following Sunday, which characterized the deceased sage and philanthropist with such pathos as deeply to affect all the hearers.

On hearing of the death of a man whose kindred mind taught him to prize higher than most men could rate, Mr. Fox, proposed that his remains should be deposited in the national Mausoleum of Genius ; but was soon informed that a clause in the departed sage's will had requested the forbearance of posthumous honours.

THE LAST WILL OF EDMUND BURKE.

“ If my dear son and friend had survived me, any will would have been unnecessary ; but since it has pleased God to call him to himself before his father, my duty calls upon me to make such a disposition of my worldly effects as seems to my best judgment most equitable and reasonable ; therefore I, Edmund Burke, late of the parish of St. James, Westminster, though suffering under sore and inexpressible affliction, being of sound and disposing mind, do make my last will and testament in manner following :—

“ First, according to the ancient, good, and laudable custom, of which my heart and understanding recognize the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy through the only merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire, if I should die in any place very convenient for its transport thither (but not otherwise) to be buried in the church, at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that, as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just.

“ I wish my funeral to be (without any punctiliousness in that respect) the same as that of my brother, and to exceed it as little as possible in point of charge, whether on account of

my family or of any others who would go to a greater expence; and I desire, in the same manner and with the same qualifications, that no monument beyond a middle-sized tablet, with a small and simple inscription on the church-wall, or on the flag-stone, be erected. I say this, because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends. But I have had, in my life-time, but too much of noise and compliment.

“ As to the rest, it is uncertain what I shall have after the discharge of my debts, which, when I write this, are very great. Be that as it may, my will concerning my worldly substance is short. As my entirely beloved, faithful, and affectionate wife did, during the whole time in which I lived most happily with her, take on her the charge and management of my affairs, assisted by her son, whilst God was pleased to lend him to us, and did conduct them often in a state of much derangement and embarrassment, with a patience and prudence which probably have no example, and thereby left my mind free to prosecute my public duty or my studies, or to indulge in my relaxations, or to cultivate my friends, at my pleasure; so, on my death, I wish things to continue as substantially as they have always done. I therefore, by this my last and only will, devise, leave, and bequeath to my entirely beloved and incomparable wife, Jane Mary Burke, the whole

real estate of which I shall die seised, whether land, rents, or houses, in absolute fee-simple; as also all my personal estate, whether stock, furniture, plate, money, or securities for money, annuities for lives or for years, be the said estate of what nature, quality, extent or description it may, to her sole uncontrouled possession and disposal, as her property in any manner which may seem proper to her, to possess and dispose of the same, whether it be real estate or personal estate, by her last will or otherwise. It being my intention that she may have as clear and uncontrouled a right and title thereto and therein as I possess myself, as to the use, expenditure, sale, or devise. I hope these words are sufficient to express the absolute, unconditioned, and unlimited right of complete ownership I mean to give to her to the said lands and goods; and I trust that no words or surplusage or ambiguity may vitiate this my clear intention. There are no persons who have a right, or, I believe, a disposition to complain of this bequest, which I have duly weighed, and made on a proper consideration of my duties, and the relations in which I stand.

“ I also make my wife, Jane Mary Burke aforesaid, my sole executrix of this my last will; knowing that she will receive advice and assistance from my excellent friends Dr. Walker King and Dr. Lawrence, to whom I recom-

mend her and her concerns; though that, perhaps, is needless, as they are as much attached to her as they are to me. I do it only to mark my special confidence in their affection, skill, and industry.

“ I wish that my dear wife may, as soon after my decease as possible (which, after what has happened, she will see with constancy and resignation) make her will, with the advice and assistance of the two persons I have named. But it is my wish also, that she will not think herself so bound up by any bequests she may make in the said will, and which, while she lives, can be only intentions, as not during her life to use her property, with all the liberty I have given her over it, just as if she had written no will at all ; but in every thing to follow the directions of her own equitable and charitable mind, and her own prudent and measured understanding.

“ Having thus committed every thing to her discretion, I recommend (subject always to that discretion) that if I should not, during my life, give or secure to my dear niece, Mary C. Haviland, wife of my worthy friend Captain Haviland, the sum of 1000*l*. or an annuity equivalent to it, that she would bestow upon her that sum of money, or that annuity, conditioned and limited in such manner as she, my wife aforesaid, may think proper, by a devise in her will or otherwise, as she may find most con-

venient to the situation of her affairs, without pressure upon her, during her life. My wife put me in mind of this, which I now recommend to her. I certainly some years ago gave my niece reason to expect it; but I was not able to execute my intentions. If I do this in my life time, this recommendation goes for nothing.

“As to my other friends and relations, and companions through life, and especially the friends and companions of my son, who were the dearest of mine, I am not unmindful of what I owe them. If I do not name them all here, and mark them with tokens of my remembrance, I hope they will not attribute it to unkindness, or to a want of a due sense of their merits towards me. My old friend and faithful companion, Will. Burke, knows his place in my heart. I do not mention him as executor or assistant. I know that he will attend to my wife; but I chuse the two I have mentioned, as, from their time of life, of greater activity. I recommend him to them.

“In the political world I have made many connections, and some of them amongst persons of high rank. Their friendship, from political, became personal to me: and they have shewn it in a manner more than to satisfy the utmost demands that could be made from my love and sincere attachment to them. They are the worthiest people in the kindgom: their

intentions are excellent, and I wish them every kind of success. I bequeath my brother-in-law, John Nugent, and the friends in my poor son's list, which is in his mother's hands, to their protection : as to them and the rest of my companions, who constantly honoured and chused our house as our inmates, I have put down their names in a list, that my wife should send them the usual remembrance of little mourning rings, as a token of my remembrance. In speaking of my friends, to whom I owe so many obligations, I ought to name especially Lord Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Portland, and the Lord Cavendishes, with the Duke of Devonshire, the worthy head of that family.

“ If the intimacy which I have had with others has been broken off by political difference on great questions concerning the state of things existing and impending, I hope they will forgive whatever of general human infirmity, or of my own particular infirmity, has entered into that contention. I heartily entreat their forgiveness. I have nothing farther to say.

“ Signed and sealed as my last will and testament, this 11th day of August, 1794, being written all with my own hand.

EDMUND BURKE.” (L. S.)

“ In the presence of

DUPONT,

WM. WEBSTER,

WALKER KING.”

“On reading the above will, I have nothing to add or essentially alter ; but one point may want to be perfected and explained. In leaving my lands and hereditaments to my wife, I find that I have omitted the words which in deeds create an inheritance in law. Now, though I think them hardly necessary in a will, yet to obviate all doubts, I explain the matter in a Codicil which is annexed to this.

(Signed)

EDMUND BURKE.”

THE CODICIL.

“I Edmund Burke, of the parish of Beaconsfield, in the county of Bucks, being of sound and disposing judgment and memory, make this my last will and testament, in no sort revoking, but explaining and confirming, a will made by me, and dated the 11th of August, 1794, in which will I have left, devised, and bequeathed, all my worldly effects, of whatever nature and quality the same may be, whatever lands, tenements, houses, freehold and leasehold interests, pensions for lives or years, arrears of the same, legacies, or other debts due to me, plate, household stuff, books, stock in cattle and horses, and utensils of farming, and all other my goods and chattels, to my dear wife, Jane Mary Burke, in as full and perfect manner as the same might be devised, conveyed, or transferred to her by any act or instrument whatsoever, with such recommendations as in my will aforesaid are made, and with a

wish that in the discharge of my debts the course hitherto pursued may be as nearly as possible observed. Sensible, however, that in payment of debt no exact rule can be preserved, the same is therefore left to her discretion, with the advice of our friends, whom she will naturally consult. The reason of my making this will or codicil to my former will, is from my having omitted, in devising by that will my lands and hereditaments to my wife aforesaid, the full and absolute property thereof, and therein I have omitted the legal words of inheritance. Now, though I think those words, however necessary in a deed, are not so in a will; yet, to prevent all questions, I do hereby devise all my lands, tenements, and hereditaments, as well as all other property that may be subject to a strict rule of law in deeds, and which would pass if undevised to my heirs, I say I do devise the same lands, tenements, and hereditaments, to my wife, Jane Mary Burke, and her heirs for ever, in pure, absolute, and unconditional fee simple.

“ I have now only to recommend to the kindness of my Lord Chancellor (Lord Loughborough), to his Grace the Duke of Portland, to the Most Honourable the Marquis of Buckingham, to the Right Honourable William Windham, and to Dr. Lawrence, of the Commons, and Member of Parliament, that they will, after my death, continue their protec-

tion and favour to the emigrant school at Penn, and will entreat, with a weight on which I dare not presume, the Right Honourable William Pitt to continue the necessary allowance which he has so generously and charitably provided for those unhappy children of meritorious parents; and that they will superintend the same, which I wish to be under the immediate care and protection of Dr. Walker King and Dr. Lawrence; and that they will be pleased to exert their influence to place the said young persons in some military corps, or some other service, as may best suit their dispositions and capacities, praying God to bless their endeavours.

“ Signed and sealed as a codicil to my will, or an explanation and confirmation thereof, agreeably to the note placed at the end of it, this 30th day of January, 1795.

EDMUND BURKE.”

“ In the presence of
WALKER KING,
RICHARD BURKE,
EDWARD NAGLE.”

Mr. Burke was about five feet ten inches high, well made and muscular; of that firm and compact frame that denotes more strength than bulk. His countenance, I am told, had been in his youth handsome. The expression of his face was less striking than one, who had not

seen him, would have anticipated. During the vigour of his age he had excelled at the manly exercises most common in Ireland, especially leaping, pitching the bar, and throwing the stone.

No charge has been more frequently made against Burke than one that would affect either his intellectual or moral character, or both. This was the charge of INCONSISTENCY. The unjustness of this charge has, I trust, appeared through this narration. The more fully we consider his principles, reasonings, and conduct, the more minutely we examine the parts, the more comprehensively we contemplate the whole, the more completely shall we see that Burke has been, in his intellectual processes, in his moral and political conduct, uniformly CONSISTENT. "LET EXPERIENCE BE YOUR GUIDE, AVOID UNTRIED SPECULATIONS." That maxim governed his reasonings respecting America. "Experience (he said) has shewn you that your former mode of treating your colonies has been beneficial; do not change that mode for an untried theory of taxation." Experience taught him that religion was friendly to virtue and order. The lesson taught by his exposure of the Bolingbroke philosophy was, "Do not for speculations of infidelity abandon those principles of religion which experience has taught you to be necessary to good government, virtue, and happiness." In his

letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol he speaks the same language. "Some men propose untried speculations on the rights of man as the foundation of government. I reprobate these notions, because not sanctioned by experience." On the French revolution, his doctrine is, "religion, justice, and regard to property, have been proved by experience to be necessary to the well being of society. I reprobate a system that disregards these principles; because, following my constant guide, experience, I perceive that the new theory and practice must be pernicious." He preserved consistency, by varying his means to secure the unity of his end: when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sailed was endangered by overloading it upon one side, he carried the weight of his reasons to that which might preserve the equipoise. These were the rules of his judgment and conduct. Adopting and applying these rules *from the beginning to the end of his intellectual, moral, and political efforts, EDMUND BURKE WAS CONSISTENT.*

Having already endeavoured, in the course of this narrative, to exhibit the prominent features of Burke's intellectual and moral character, I shall conclude with a brief summary, which will merely collect my scattered observations.

Edmund Burke was endowed by nature, in a most extraordinary degree, with that combina-

tion of powers which constitutes genius : an understanding rapidly penetrating, energetic, comprehensive, and profound ; a memory, quick, retentive, and capacious ; a fancy vivid, versatile, rapid, and forcible. Art and discipline improved these powers, and furnished them with ample materials. Those who have partially considered the operations of Burke's genius have supposed his fancy to have predominated ; but a more thorough acquaintance with his mental operations would convince them that, though his fancy ranges through every region of knowledge, and soars to every height of science, for amusement, embellishment, allusion, or analogy ; yet reason is the faculty that presides in his intellectual processes. Whatever sportive, beautiful, or grand imagery may decorate his works, the body is history and deduction, antecedent and consequent. Disciplined by the soundest philosophy, his ratiocinative operations proceed from principles the most efficacious in the investigation of truth and conveyance of instruction. The great guide of his reasoning is EXPERIENCE ; an experience not merely of model, but of law, comprehending not merely individual governments and societies, but the constitution of man. This was the light by which he saw the effects of Bolingbroke's speculations. This shewed him the consequences of the new philosophy of France, sixteen years before it was reduced to practice. This pointed out the

danger of the new theories respecting America, of Price's and Priestley's new doctrines on government. This gave him from the commencement a complete view of the consequences of the French revolution. His powerful understanding, besides being guided by the best director as to the objects of pursuit and rejection, was in all its efforts comprehensive. It carried its views to all the parts and to the whole ; to causes and effects ; to adjuncts ; to every relation or circumstance which might affect the subject in question. This COMPREHENSIVENESS OF CONSIDERATION is manifest in his survey of the internal state and history of this country ;—in his “Thoughts on the present Discontents ;” in his examinations of our systems respecting America ; his plan of œconomy ; his views of the affairs of India ; and, above all, in his conclusions concerning the revolution of France.

The *materials* with which a mind so endowed, so guided, and so operating, was furnished, were as extensive as the history and principles of physical and moral science, as the history and practice of art. Great as were his powers of acquirement, successfully as they had been exerted, his *means of communication* were no less efficacious. No orator ever surpassed him in the whole constituents of eloquence, and in the *most important* few equalled him,—in the information, principles, moral and political les-

sons, which his speeches and writings convey. If we judge from detached parts of his works, there may be inequalities found. In the structure of St. Paul's there may be stones less smooth than some in a small cottage. We judge not from the minute parts, but from *the whole* of the massy, strong, magnificent, and sublime work.

If a common understanding may venture to notice in such a mind as his what it thinks the most prominent features, I should say that an understanding of the most extraordinary force, *directing its exertions to the whole compass of phenomena*, and *guided*, in the conclusions it draws from that wide range of premises, *by the direction of experience*, has been among the excellencies which have *most peculiarly distinguished Edmund Burke*: that poetically rich, splendid, beautiful, and grand, as his imagery is, he is CHIEFLY EMINENT FOR THE DISCOVERY OF MOMENTOUS TRUTH, AND THE COMMUNICATION OF MOMENTOUS INSTRUCTION. A genius that has shewn a fitness for any species of exertion, has rarely been more frequently and completely exerted to render men wiser, better, and happier. The more closely the intellectual history and principles of this wonderful personage are examined, the more thoroughly, I may venture to assert, shall we be convinced that, with every power, and numberless exertions, in sublime

poetry,* his principal and most successful efforts have been in sublime practical philosophy. The qualities of his heart were no less amiable and estimable than his talents were astonishing:—benevolent, just, temperate, magnanimous. He loved his country, loved its constitution, because he believed it the best adapted for its happiness: at different times, from the same principle, he supported different members of it, when he thought the one or other likely to be overbalanced. During the prevalence of the Bute plans, dreading the influence of the Crown, he supported the People; and, for the same cause, during the American war. After the overthrow of the French monarchy and aristocracy, and the dissemination in Britain of the principles that had destroyed these orders, apprehending similar effects, if not vigorously opposed in England, he strenuously supported the monarchy and aristocracy. Thus discriminately patriotic in public life, in his private relations his conduct was highly meritorious. A fond and attentive husband, an affectionate and judiciously indulgent father, a sincere friend, at once fervid and active, a liberal and

* By poetry the reader will perceive that I mean creative fancy: the sense in which Lord Bacon uses it, when deriving the three great species of composition, history, poetry, and philosophy, from their sources in the understanding, memory, fancy, and reason.

kind master, an agreeable neighbour, a zealous and bountiful patron, he diffused delight and happiness. His principles were as strict and his habits as virtuous as his dispositions were kind.

His manners were pleasing, insinuating, and engaging, in all companies, but especially in the exercise of hospitality in his own house. His ardent sensibility rendered his temper irritable: his rage, though violent, was not lasting. The contention of active politics called that infirmity forward much more frequently than a calmer situation might have done.

Such only were the trivial foibles that his enemies could with truth alledge, to counterbalance his qualities and talents. With so little alloy, and so much sterling value, in realms in which great talents are frequent, and great virtues not rare, in the usual course of intellectual and moral excellence, centuries may pass before Providence again bestow an

EDMUND BURKE.

FINIS.





